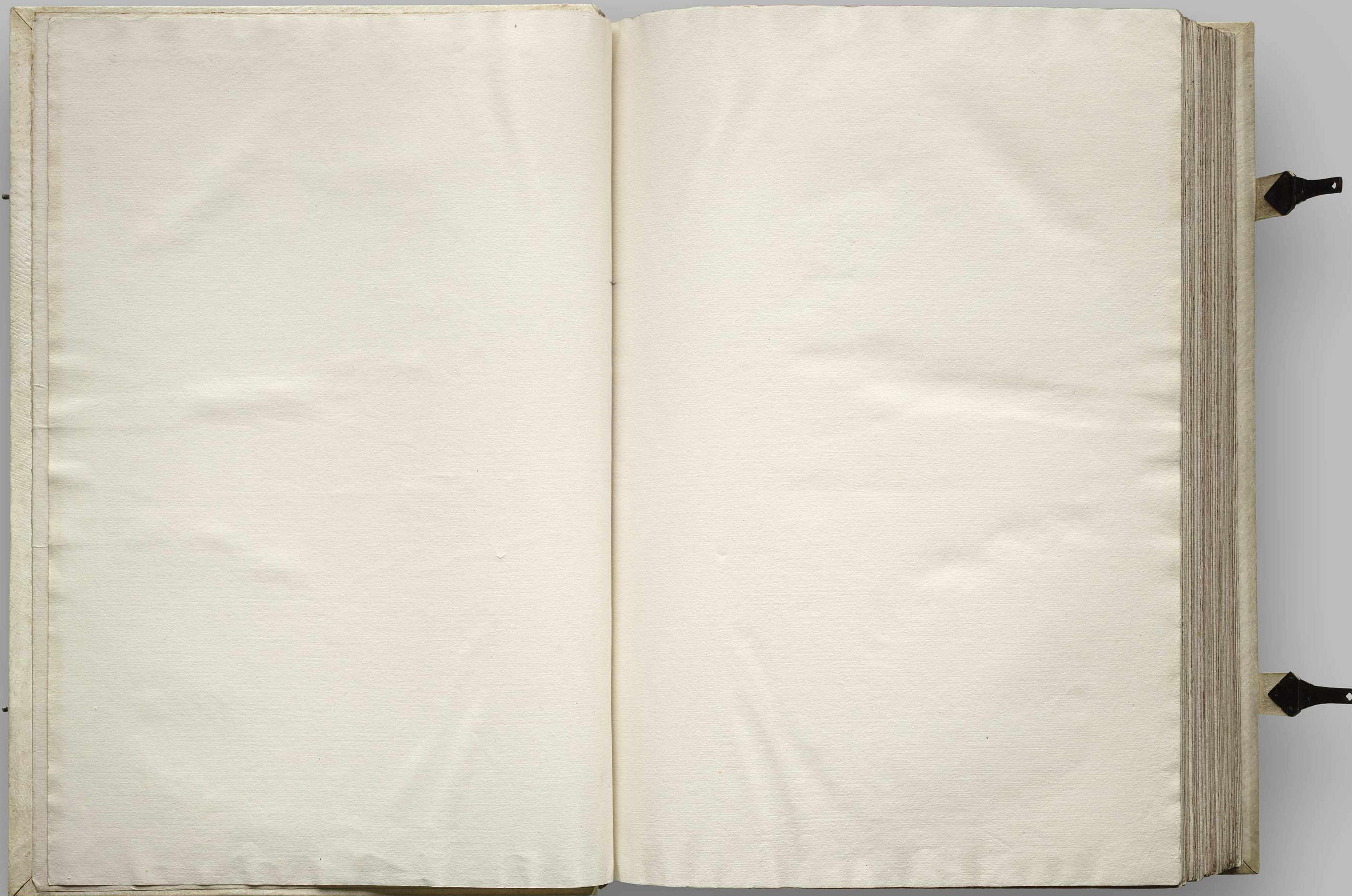
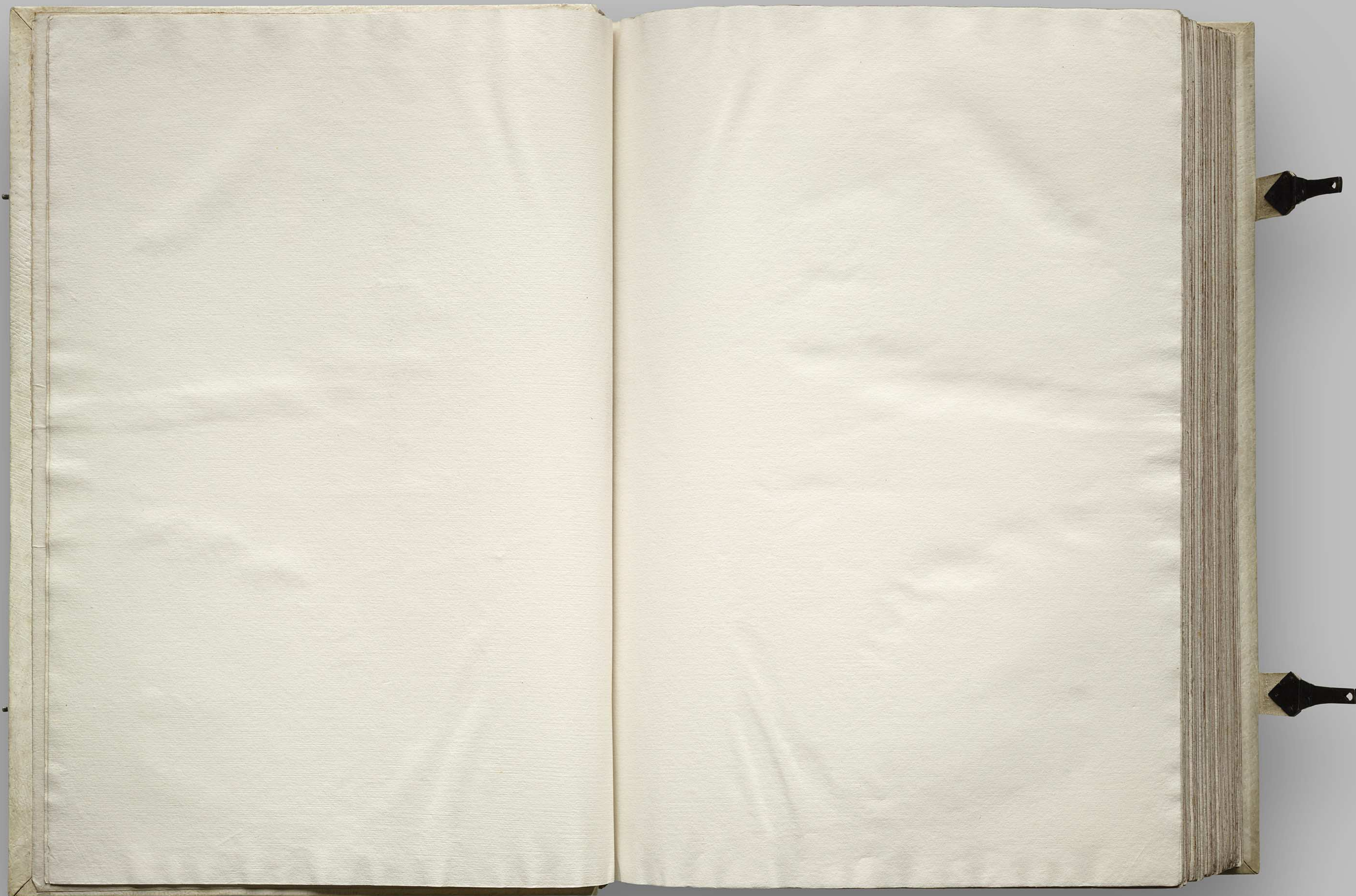
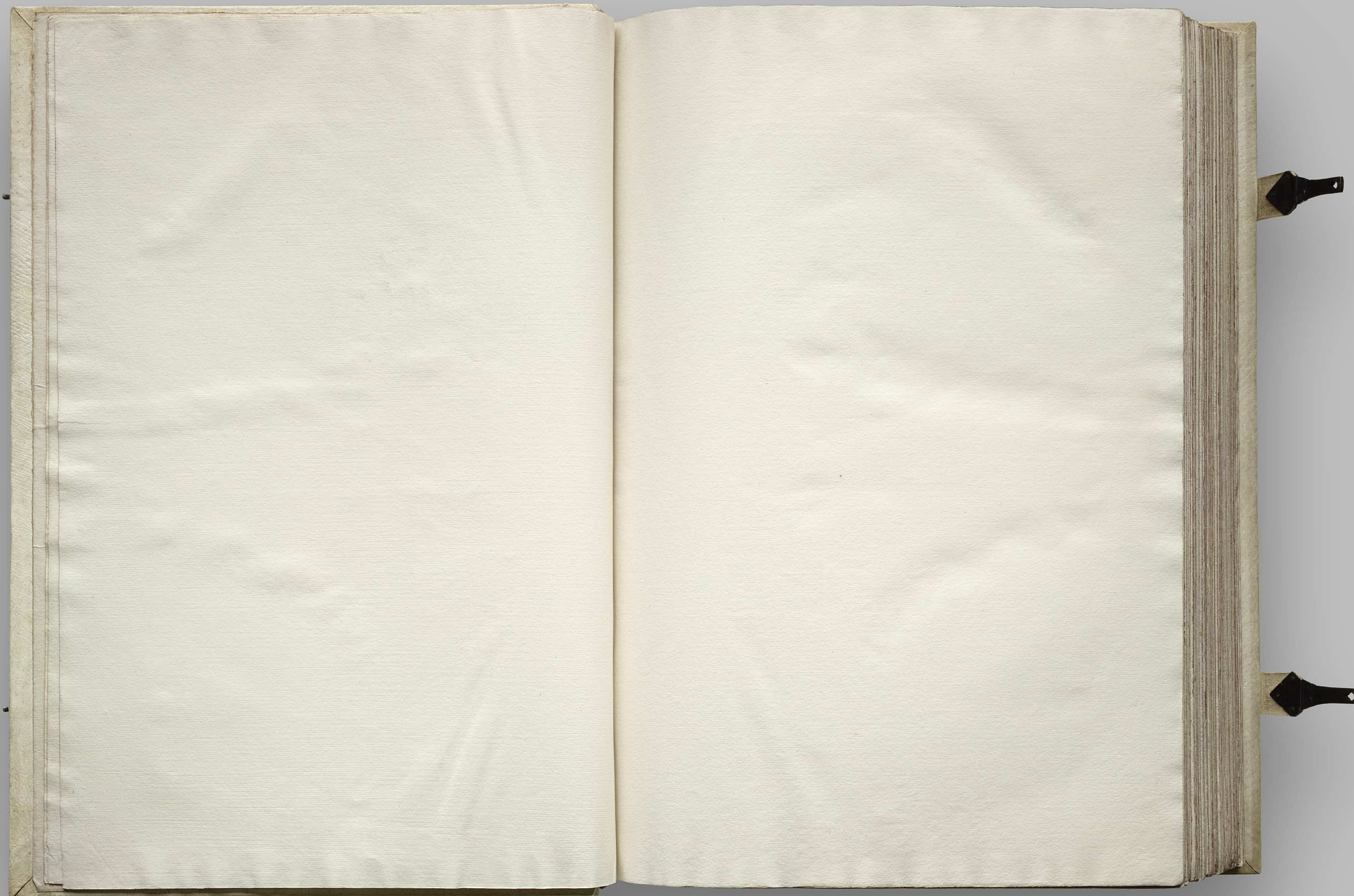


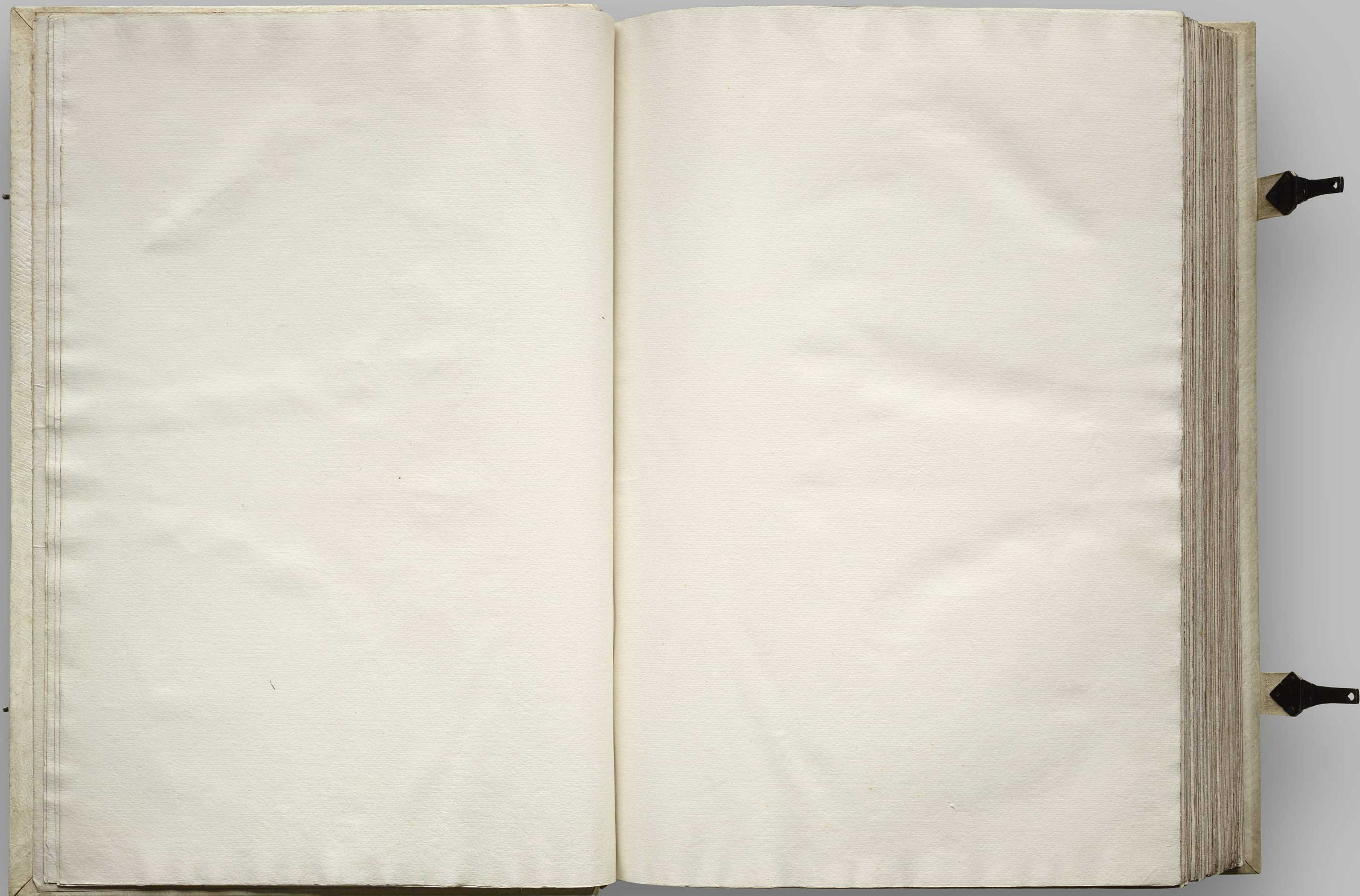


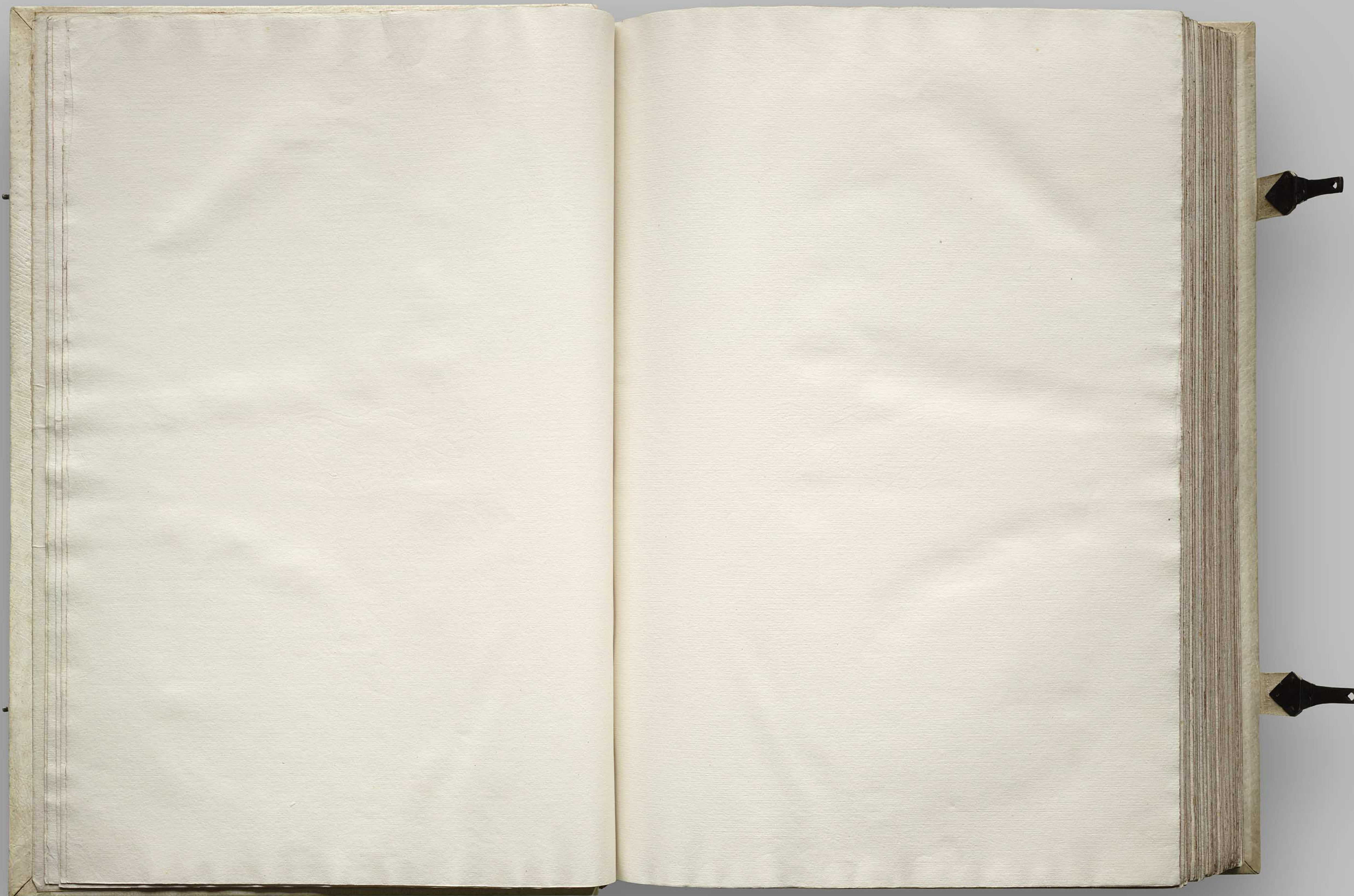
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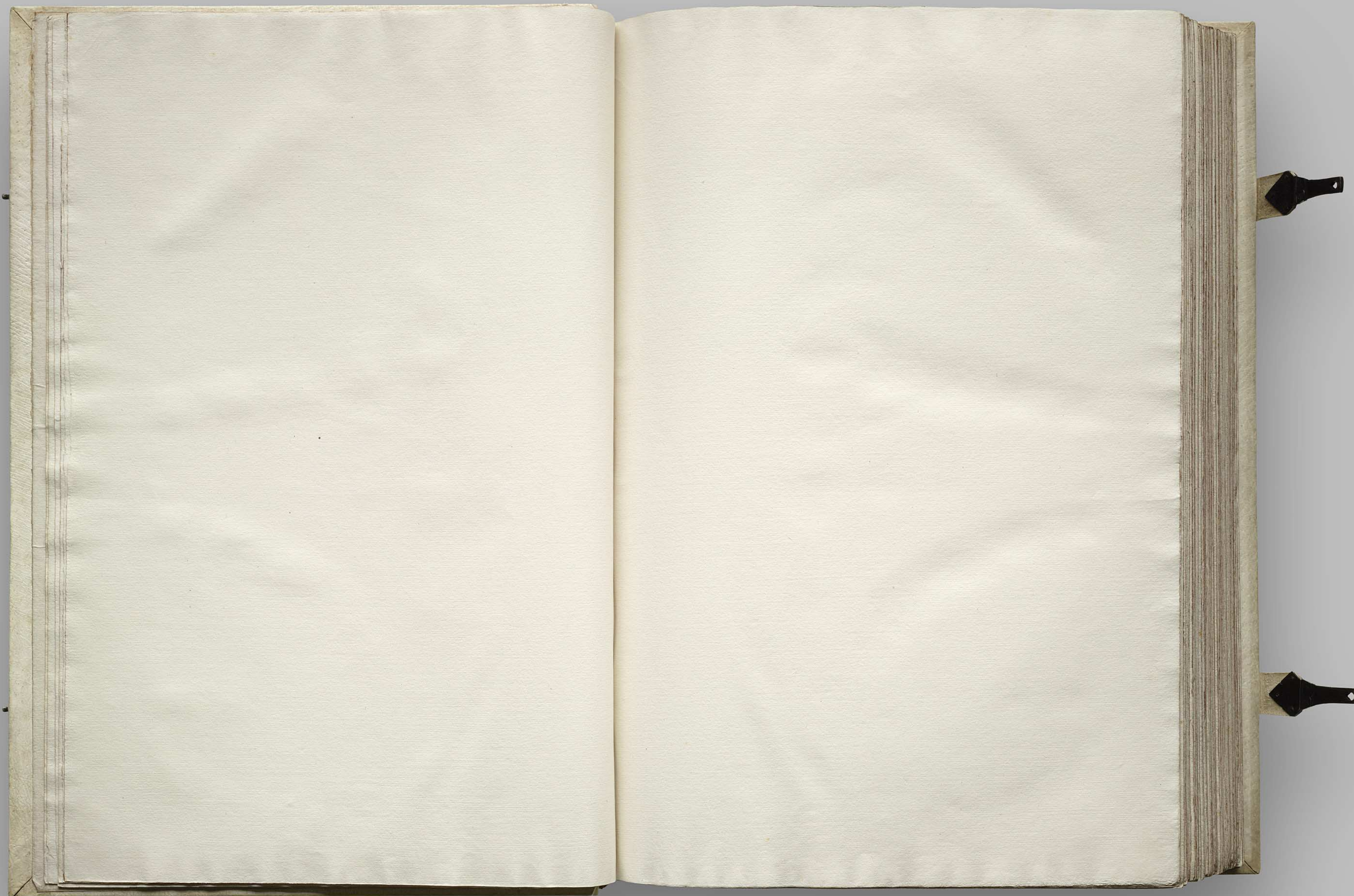


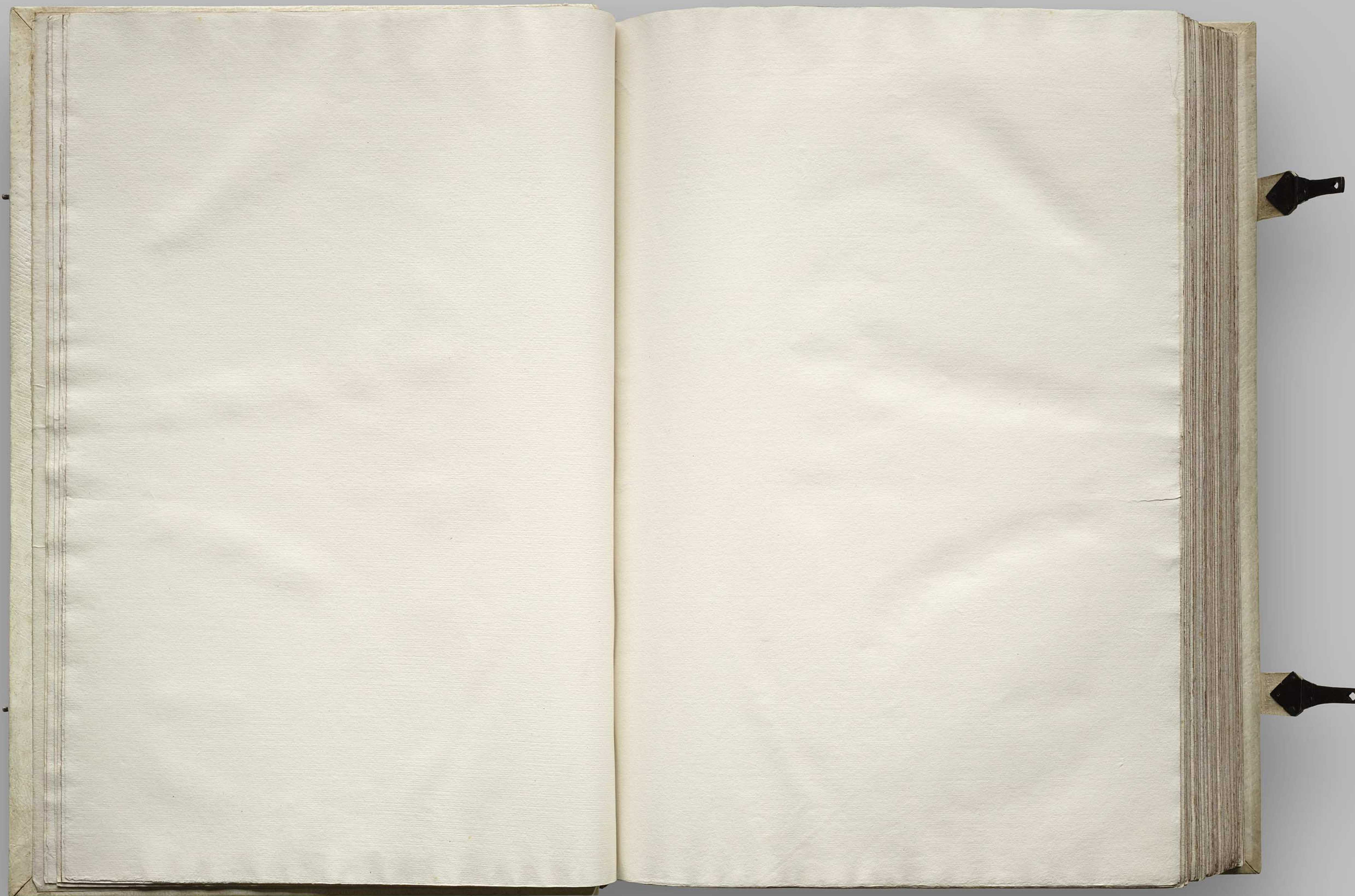


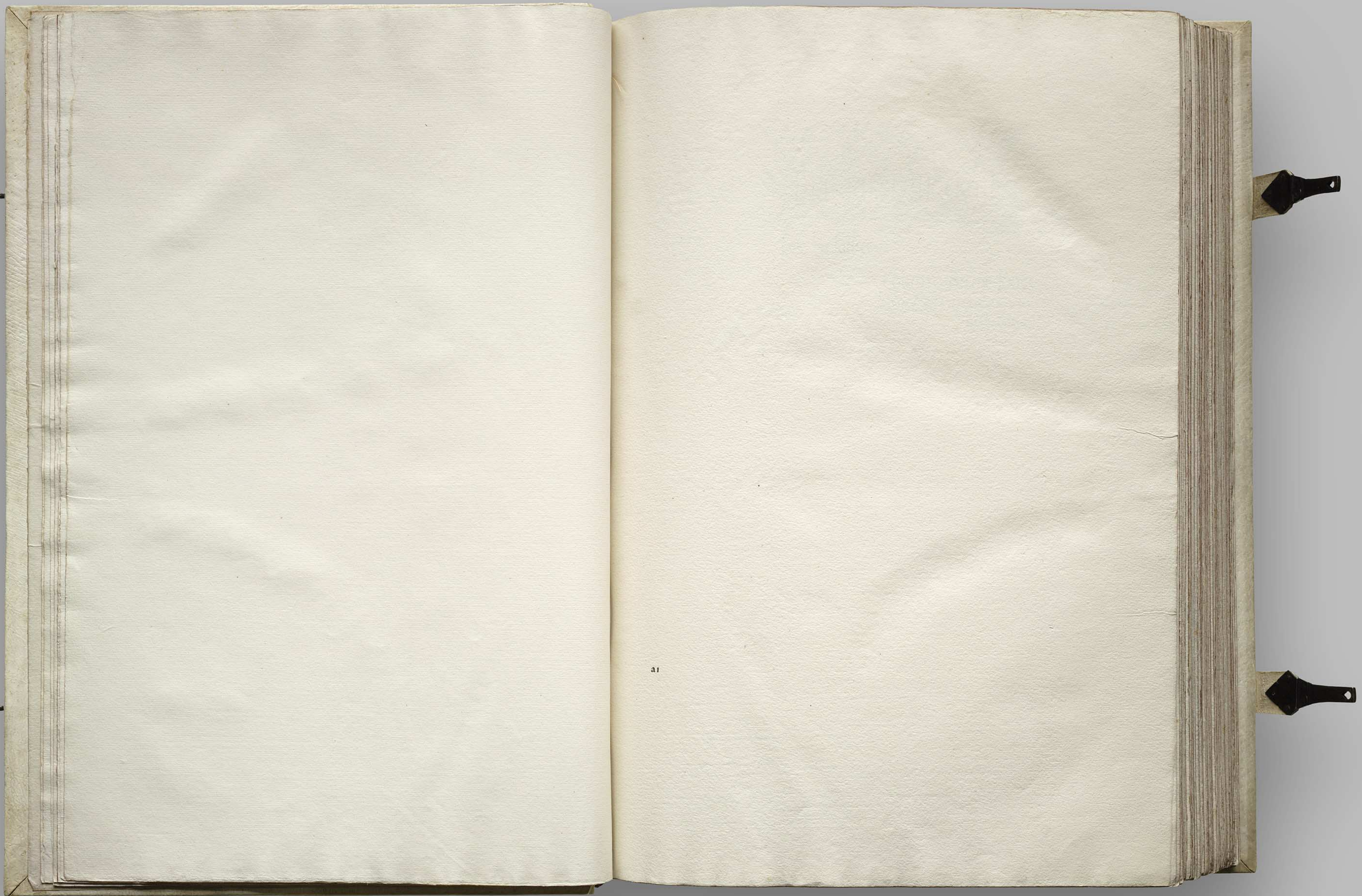












to Margaret Mackail

from her father

Edward Burne-Jones

June 3rd MDCCCXCVI:

LONDON

THE WORKS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

1	The Canterbury Tales
2	The Book of the Duchess
3	The Knight's Tale
4	The Clerk's Tale
5	The Merchant's Tale
6	The Wife of Bath's Tale
7	The Friar's Tale
8	The Cook's Tale
9	The Shipman's Tale
10	The Doctor's Tale
11	The Clerk's Tale
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the works of
Geoffrey Chaucer
now newly
imprinted

HERE BEGINNETH THE GILES OF CANTERBURY
AND FIRST THE PROLOGUE THEREOF



THAT Aprille with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Alhan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every bolt and heeth

The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne,
And smale foweles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open eye,
So priketh hem nature in hir corages;
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The hooly blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen whan that they were
seeke.

IF IIL that in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as
I lay,
Redy to wenden on my pilgrym-
age
To Caunterbury with ful devout

corage,
At nyght were come into that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle
In felawshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.

The chambres and the stables weren wyde
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
That I was of hir felaweshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse
To take oure wey, ther as I yow devyse.
But natheles, whil I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thynketh it acordaunt to resoun,
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree,
And eek in what array that they were inne;
And at a knyght than wol I first bigynne.

The
Knyght

AKNYGHTE ther was & that a worthy
man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To riden out, he loved chivalrie,
Trouwte and honour, fredom and
curteisie.

Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre,
As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse,
And evere honoured for his worthynesse.
At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade at the seege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
At Lyceys was he, and at Satalye,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See
At many a noble army hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for oure feith at Tramysene
In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye
Agayn another hethen in Turkye;
And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde
In al his lyf unto no maner wight;
He was a verray parfit gentil knyght.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors were goode, but he was nat gay;
Of fustian he wered a gypoun
Al bismotered with his habergeoun;
for he was late ycome from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.

The
Squier

ALTHYH ther was his sone, a yong
Squier,
A lovyere and a lusty bacheler,
With lokkes crulle as they were leyd
in presse;
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly delyvere and of greet strengthe,
And he hadde been somtyme in chyvachie,
In flaundes, in Artoys and Pycardie,
And born hym weel, as of so litel space,

In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a meede
Al ful of fresshe floures whyte and reede;
Synge he was, or floytyng, al the day;
He was as fressh as is the month of May.
Short was his gowne, with sleeves longe and wyde;
Wel koude he sitte on hors and faire ryde;
He koude songes make and wel endite,
Juste, & eek daunce, and wel purtreye and write.
So hoot he lovede, that by nyghtertale
He slepte namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale;
Curteis he was, lowely and servysable,
And carf biforn his fader at the table.

YEMAN hadde he, & servants namo
At that tyme, for him liste ride soo;
And he was clad in cote and hood of
grene:
A sheef of pecock arwes bright and
kene

Under his belt he bar ful thriftily,
Wel koude he dresse his takel yemanty;
His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe,
And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe.
A not heed hadde he, with a broun visage;
Of woode craft wel koude he al the usage.
Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,
And by his syde a sword and a bokeler,
And on that oother syde a gay daggere,
Harnaised wel and sharpe as point of spere;
A Cristophre on his brest of silver sheene.
An horn he bar, the bawdryk was of grene;
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

HER was also a Nonne, a Prioressse,
That of hir smylyng was ful symple
and coy;
Hire gretteste ooth was but by seint
Loy,
And she was cleped madame

Egleyntye.
Ful weel she doong the service dyvyne
Entuned in hir nose ful semeely;
And frenssh she spak ful faire and fetistly
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
for frenssh of Parys was to hir unknowe.
At mete wel ytaught was she withalle,
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce depe.
Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel kepe,
That no drope ne fille upon hire brist;
In curteisie was set ful muchel hir list.
Hire over lippe wyped she so clene,
That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte;
ful semeely after hir mete she raughte.
And siherly she was of greet desport,
And ful plesaunt and amyable of port,
And peyned hire to countrefete cheere
Of court, and to been estatlich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But for to speken of hire conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe if that she saugh a mous
Raught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde

With rosted flessch, or milk and wastel breed;
But soore wepte she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte,
And al was conscience and tendre herte.
ful semeely hir wympul pynched was;
Hire nose tretys, hir eyen greye as glas,
Hir mouth ful smal, and therto softe and reed;
But siherly she hadde a fair forheed,
It was almoost a spanne brood I trowe;
for hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
ful fetys was hir cloke, as I was war;
Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene,
And theron heng a brooch of gold ful sheene,
On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after, Amor vincit omnia.
Another Nonne with hire hadde she,
That was hir Chapelyne, and preestes thre.

The
Monk

AMONK ther was, a fair for the mais-
trie,
An out-ridere that lovede venerie;
A manly man, to been an abbot able,
ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in
stable,

And whan he rood men myghte his brydel heere
Gynglen in a whistlyng wynd als cleere,
And eek as loude, as dooth the chapel belle.
Theras this lord was kepere of the celle,
The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,
Bycause that it was old and somdel streit,
This ilke monk leet olde thynges pace,
And heeld after the newe world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
That seith that hunters beth nat hooly men,
Ne that a monk whan he is reccheles
Is likned til a fish that is waterlees;
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystre;
But thilke text heeld he nat worth an oystre;
And I seyde his opinioun was good.
What, sholde he studie & make himselfen wood
Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure,
Or swynken with his handes, and laboure,
As Austyn bit? How shal the world be served?
Lat Austyn have his swynk to him reserved.
Therefore he was a prikasour aright;
Grehoundes he hadde, as swift as fowel in flight.
Of prikyng and of huntynge for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleeves ypurfild at the hond
With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;
And for to festne his hood under his chyn
He hadde of gold ywrought a curious pyn,
A loveknotte in the gretter end ther was.
His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as it hadde been enoynt;
He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt.
Hise eyen stepe, and rollyng in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed;
His bootes souple, his hors in greet estaat.
Now certeinly he was a fair prelaat.
He was nat pale, as a forpynd goost;
A fat swan loved he best of any roost;
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

b 2

AFRERE ther was, a wantowne and a
merye,
A lymytour, a ful solempne man,
In alle the ordres four is noon that
kan

The frere

So muchel of daliaunce & fair langage;
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen at his owene cost:
Unto his ordre he was a noble post.
And wel biloved and famulier was he
With frankeleyns over al in his contree;
And eek with worthy wommen of the toun:
for he hadde power of confessioun,
As seyde hymself, moore than a curat,
for of his ordre he was licenciat.
ful swetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun.
He was an esy man to yeve penaunce,
Theras he wiste to have a good pitaunce;
for unto a povre ordre for to yive
Is signe that a man is wel yshryve;
for if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt:
for many a man so harde is of his herte,
He may nat wepe although hym soore smerte,
Therefore, in stede of wepyng and preyeres,
Men moote yeve silver to the povre freres.
His tyet was ay farsed ful of knyves
And pynnes, for to yeven yonge wyves;
And certeinly he hadde a murye note,
Wel koude he synge and pleyen on a rote;
Of yeddyinges he baar outrely the pris.
His nekke whit was as the flour/de/lys,
Therto he strong was as a champion.
He knew the tavernes wel in al the toun,
And everich hostiler and tappestere
Bet than a lazor or a beggestere;
for unto swich a worthy man as he
Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
To have with sike lazars aqueyntaunce;
It is nat honeste, it may nat avaunce
for to deelen with no swich poraille,
But al with riche and selleres of vitaille.
And overal, ther as profit sholde arise,
Curteis he was, and lowely of servyse.
Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous;
He was the beste beggere in his hous;
for thogh a wydwe hadde noght a sho,
So plesaunt was his In principio,
Yet wolde he have a ferthyng er he wente.
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente;
And rage he koude as it were right a whelpe.
In love dayes ther koude he muchel helpe,
for there he was nat lyk a cloysterer
With a thredbare cope, as is a povre scolere,
But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
Of double worstede was his semyclope,
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
Somwhat he lipped for his wantownesse,
To make his Englissh sweete upon his tonge,
And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde songe,
Hise eyen twynkled in his heed aryght,
As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght.
This worthy lymytour was cleped Huberd.

3

The
Marchant

MARCHANT was ther with a
forked berd,
In mottelée, and hye on horse he sat;
Upon his heed a flaundryssh bevere
hat;

His bootes clasped faire & fetisly.
His resons he spak ful solempnely,
Sownynge alway thencrees of his wynnynge.
He wolde the see were kept for any thing
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.
Wel koude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette,
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So estatly was he of his governaunce,
With his bargaynes and with his chevyssaunce.
For sothe he was a worthy man withalle,
But sooth to seyn, I noot how men hym calle.

The
Clerk of
Oxenford

CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,
That unto logyk hadde longe ygo.
And leene was his hors as is a rake,
And he nas nat right fat, I under-
take,

But looked holwe, and therto
sobrelly;
ful thredbare was his overeste courtpey,
for he hadde geten hym yet no benefice,
Ne was so worldly for to have office.
for hym was levere have at his beddes heed
A twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed,
Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
Than robes riche, or fithele or gay sautrie:
But al be that he was a philosopre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
But al that he myghte of his freendes hente,
On bookes and his lernynge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf hym wherwith to scoleye.
Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede,
Noght o word spak he moore than was neede,
And that was seyde in forme and reverence,
And short and quyk and ful of hy sentence.
Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.

The Ser-
geant of
Lawe

SERGEANT of the Lawe, war
and wys,
That often hadde been at the parvyss,
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, & of greet reverence;
He semed swich, hise wordes weren
so wise.

Justice he was ful often in assise,
By patente and by pleyn commissioun;
for his science, and for his heigh renoun
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon;
So greet a purchasour was nowher noon:
Al was fee symple to hym in effect,
His purchasyng myghte nat been infect.
Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and doomes alle
That from the tyme of Kyng William were falle;
Therto he koude endite, and make a thyng,
Ther koude no wight pynchen at his writyng;
And every statut koude he pleyn by rote.

4

He rood but hoornly in a medlee cote
Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;
Of his array telle I no longer tale.

FRANKELEYN was in his com-
paignye.
Whit was his heed as is a dayesye,
Of his complexioun he was sang-
wyn.

Wel loved he by the morwe a sope
in wyn;

To lyven in delit was evere his wone,
for he was Epicurus owene sone,
That heeld opinioun that pleyn delit
Was verrailly felicittee parfit.

An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;
Seint Julian was he in his contree;
His breed, his ale, was always after oon;
A better envyned man was nevere noon.
Withoute bake mete was nevere his hous,
Of fish and flessch, and that so plenteuous,
It snwed in his hous of mete and drynke,
Of alle deyntees that men koude thynke:

After the sondry sesons of the year,
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe
And many a breem and many a luce in stuwe.
Wo was his cook but if his sauce were
Doynant and sharpe, and redy al his geere.
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;
ful ofte tyme he was knyght of the shire.
An anlaas, and a gipsier al of silk,
Heeng at his girdel whit as morne milk.
A shirreve hadde he been and a countour:
Was nowher such a worthy vavasour.

AN Haberdasshere, and a Carpenter,
A Webbe, a Dyere, and a Capycer,
And they were clothed alle in o lyveree
Of a solempne & a greet fraternitee;
ful fresch and newe hir geere apiked
was;

hir knyves were ychaped noght with bras,
But al with silver wrought ful clene and weel,
Hire girdles and hir pouches everydeel.
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys
To sitten in a yeldehalle on a deys.
Everich, for the wisdom that he kan,
Was shaply for to been an alderman;
for catel hadde they ynogh, and rente,
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
And elles certeyn were they to blame,
It is ful fair to been ycleped Madame,
And goon to vigilies al bifore,
And have a mantel roialliche ybore.

COOK they hadde with hem for the
nones,
To boille the chicknes with the
marybones
And poudre-marchant tart, and
galyngale;

Wel koude he knowe a draughte of London ale.
He koude rooste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,
Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye;

The Ship-
man

But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shyne a mormal hadde he;
for blankmanger, that made he with the beste.

SHIPMAN was ther, wonynge fer
by weste;
for aught I woot, he was of Derte-
mouthe.

He rood upon a rouncy as he kouthte,
In a gowne of faldyng to the knee.
A daggere hangynge on a laas hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The boote somer hadde maad his hewe al broun,
And certeinly he was a good felawe.
ful many a draughte of wyn had he ydrawe
fro Burdeauxward whil that the chapman sleepe;
Of nyce conscience took he no keepe;
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem boon to every lond.
But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
his strems and his daungers hym bisides,
His herberwe and his moone, his lodemenage,
Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.
hardy he was, and wys to undertake;
With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.
He knew alle the havenes as they were
from Gootlond to the Cape of fynystere,
And every cryke in Britaigne and in Spayne;
his barge ycleped was the Maudelayne.

The
Doctour
of phisik

DOCTH us ther was a Doctour of Phi-
sik;
In al this world ne was ther noon
hym lik
To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
for he was grounde in astronomye;

he kepte his pacient a ful greet deel
In houres by his magyk natureel.
Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his ymages for his pacient.

He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot, or cold, or moyste, or drye,
And where engendred and of what humour;

He was a verray parfit praktisour.
The cause yknowe, and of his harm the roote,
Anon he yaf the sike man his boote.
ful redy hadde he his apothecaries,
To sende him drogges and his letuaries,
for ech of hem made oother for to wynne,
hir frendshipe nas nat newe to bigynne.

Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,
And Deyscorides, and eek Rufus,
Olde Ypocras, Haly, and Galyen,
Serapion, Razis, and Aviceen,
Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn,
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
Of his diete mesurable was he,

for it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norrisyng and digestible;
his studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata and with sendal;
And yet he was but esy of dispence,
He kepte that he wan in pestilence,
for gold in phisik is a cordial,
Therefore he lovede gold in special.

b3

The Co-

The Wif
of Bathe

GOOD wif was ther of biside Bathe,
But she was somdel deaf and that
was scathe.
Of clooth makynge she hadde swich
an haunt,

She passed hem of Ypres & of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe, wif ne was ther noon
That to the offrynge bifore hire sholde goon,
And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
hir coverchiefs ful fyne weren of ground,
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound,
That on a Sonday weren upon hir heed.
hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
ful streite yteyd, and shoes ful moyste & newe;
Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirche dore she hadde fyve,
Withouten oother compaignye in youthe,
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nowthe;
And thries hadde she been at Jerusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge strem;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at Seint Jame, and at Coloigne;
She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye.
Gat tothed was she, soothly for to seye.

Upon an amblere esily she sat,
Ywympled wel, and on her heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot mantel aboute hir hippe large,
And on hire feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felaweshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe
Of remedies of love she knew perchaunce,
for she koude of that art the olde daunce.

The
Persoun

GOOD man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre Persoun of a toun;
But riche he was of hooly thought
and werk.

He was also a lerned man, a clerk
That Cristes Gospel trewely wolde
preche;

His parissshens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benygne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient;
And swich he was yprevd ofte sithes,
ful looth were hym to cursen for his tithes,
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
Unto his povre parissshens aboute
Of his offryng, and eek of his substaunce:
He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce.
Wyf was his parisshe, and houses fer asonder,
But he ne lafte nat for reyn ne thonder,
In siknesse nor in meschief to visite
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lite,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheepe he yaf
That first he wroughte, and afterward he taughte;
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte;
And this figure he added eek therto,
That if gold ruste, what shal iren doo?
for if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
And shame it is, if a preest take keepe,
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheepe.

5

Wel oughte a preest ensample for to yive,
By his clenness, how that his sheepe sholde lyve.
He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
And leet his sheepe encombred in the myre,
And ran to London, unto seint Poules,
To seken hym a chaunterie for soules;
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde,
But dwelte at hoom, and kepste wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie;
He was a shepherde, and noght a mercenarie:
And though he hooly were, and vertuous,
He was to synful man nat despitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
But in his techyng discreet and benygne.
To drawen folk to hevne by fairnesse,
By good ensample, this was his bisynesse.
But it were any persone obstinat,
What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,
Hym wolde he snybben sharply for the nonys;
A better preest I trowe that nowher noon ys.
He waited after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spiced conscience,
But Cristes loore, and his apostles twelve,
He taughte, but first he folwed it hymselfe.

The
Plowman

When hym ther was a Plowman, was
his brother,
That hadde ylad of dong ful many
a fother,
A trewe swynkere & a good was he,
Lyvyng in pees & parfit charitee.
God loved he best, with al his hoolle herte
At alle tymes, though he gamed or smerte,
And thanne his neighebores right as hymselfe.
He wolde thresshe, and therto dyke and delve
for Cristes sake for every poure wight,
Withouthen hire, if it lay in his myght.
His tithes payde he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swynk and his catel.
In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

The Reve
The
Millere
The
Somnour
The
Pardoner
The
Maunciple
Geoffrey
Chaucer

THER was also a Reve and a Millere,
A Somnour and a Pardoner also,
A Maunciple, and myself; ther were
namo.
The Millere was a stout carl for the
nonys,
ful byg he was of brawn, and eek of bones;
That proved wel, for over al ther he cam,
At wrastlyng he wolde have alwey the ram.
He was short sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,
Ther nas no dore that he ne wolde heve of harre,
Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
And therto brood, as though it were a spade.
Upon the cope right of his nose he hade
A werte, and theron stood a toft of herys,
Reed as the bristles of a sowes erys;
His nosethirles blake were and wyde;
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde;
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys,
He was a jangler and a goliardeys,
And that was moost of synne and harlotries.
Wel koude he stelen corn, and tollen thries;
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
A whit cote and a blew hood wered he,

6

A baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,
And therewithal he broghte us out of towne.
GENTIL Maunciple was ther of a
temple,
Of which achatours myghte take
exemple
for to be wise in bynyng of vitaille;
for whether that he payde, or took

by taille,
Hilgate he wayted so in his achaa,
That he was ay biforn and in good staat.
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an heepe of lerned men?
Of maistres hadde he mo than thries ten,
That weren of lawe expert and curious,
Of whiche there weren a duszeyne in that hous,
Worthy to been stywardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engelond,
To maken hym lyve by his propre good
In honour dettelees, but if he were wood,
Or lyve as scarsly as hym list desire,
And able for to helpen al a shire
In any caas that myghte falle or happe,
And yet this Maunciple sette hir aller cappe.

HE Reve was a sclendre colerik man,
His berd was shave as ny as ever he
kan;
His heer was by his crys ful round
ysorn,
His tope was doked lyk a preest
biforn.

ful longe were his legges and ful lene,
Ylyk a staf, ther was no calf ysene.
Wel koude he kepe a gerner and a bynne,
Ther was noon auditour koude on him wynne.
Wel wiste he, by the droghte and by the reyn,
The yeldyng of his seed and of his greyn.
His lordes sheepe, his neet, his dayerye,
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye,
Was hoolly in this reve governyng,
And by his covenant yaf the rekenyng
Syn that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
Ther koude no man bryngge hym in arrerage.
Ther nas baillif, ne hierde, nor oother hyne,
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;
They were adrad of hym as of the deeth.
His wonyng was ful faire upon an heeth,
With grene trees yshadwed was his place.
He koude better than his lord purchace.
ful riche he was astored pryvely,
His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly,
To yeve and lene him of his owene good,
And have a thank, and yet a gowne and hood.
In youthe he hadde lerned a good myster,
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This Reve sat upon a ful good stot,
That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.
A long surcote of pers upon he hade,
And by his syde he baar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this Reve of which I telle,
Beside a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
And evere he rood the hyndreste of oure route.

The Somnour
The Maunciple

SOMONOUR was ther with us in
that place,
That hadde a fyr reed cherubynnes
face,
for sawcefleem he was, with eyen
narwe;

As hoot he was, and lecherous as a sparwe,
With scaled browes blake, and piled berd,
Of his visage children were aferd.
Ther nas quyksilver, lytarge, ne brymstoon,
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
That hym myghte helpen of the welkes white,
Nor of the knobbes sittynge on his chekes.
Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
And for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood,
Channe wolde he speke and crie as he were wood;
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he, two or thre,
That he had lerned out of som decree;
No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
And eek ye knowen wel, how that a jay
Kan clepen Watte, as wel as kan the pope.
But whoso koude in oother thyng hym grope,
Channe hadde he spent al his philosophie;
Ay, Questio quid juris, wolde he crie.
He was a gentil harlot and a kynde;
A better felawe sholde men noght fynde.
He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn
A good felawe to have his concubyn
A twelfmonth, and excuse hym atte fulle;
And prively a fynch eek koude he pulle;
And if he foond owher a good felawe,
He wolde techen him to have noon awe,
In swich caas, of the Erecdekenes curs,
But if a mannes soule were in his purs;
for in his purs he sholde ypunysshed be:
Purs is the Erecdekenes helle, seyde he.
But wel I woot he lyed right in dede,
Of cursyng oughte ech gilti man to drede,
for curs wol slee right as assoillyng savith;
And also war him of a Significavit.
In daunger hadde he at his owene gise
The yonge girles of the diocese,
And knew hir conseil, and was al hir reed.
A gerland hadde he set upon his heed,
As greet as it were for an ale stake,
A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.

The Pardoner

When hym ther rood a gentil Pardoner
Of Rouncivale, his freend and his
compeer,
That streight was comen fro the
court of Rome,
ful loude he soong Com hider
love to me.

This Somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun,
Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun.
This Pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wax,
But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex;
By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
And therwith he his shuldres overspradde;
But thynne it lay by colpons oon and oon;
But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon,

b4

for it was trussed up in his walet.
Hym thoughte he rood al of the newe jet,
Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare,
A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe;
His walet lay biforn hym in his lappe,
Bretful of pardon, comen from Rome al hoot.
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot;
No berd hadde he, ne nevere sholde have,
As smothe it was as it were late yshave;
I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare.
But of his craft, fro Berwyk in to Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardoner;
for in his male he hadde a pilwe beer,
Which that he seyde was oure lady veyl.
He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That Seint Peter hadde whan that he wente
Upon the see, til Jhesu Crist hym hente.
He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A poure person dwellynge upon lond,
Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
And thus with feyned flaterye and japes,
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste;
Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest he song an offertorie;
for wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He moste preche, and wel affile his tonge
To wynne silver, as he ful wel koude;
Therefore he song the murierly and loude.

HAVE I toold you shortly, in a
clause,
The staat, tharray, the nombre, and
eek the cause
Why that assembled was this
campaigne

In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
But now is tyme to yow for to telle
How that we baren us that ilke nyght,
Whan we were in that hostelrye alyght;
And after wol I telle of our viage,
And al the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.

AT first, I pray yow of youre
curteisye,
That ye narette it nat my vileynye,
Though that I pleyntly speke in this
mateere,
To telle yow hir wordes & hir cheere,
Ne though I speke hir wordes proprely:
for this ye knowen also wel as I,
Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,
He moote reherce, as ny as evere he kan,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche or large;
Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feyne thyng, or fynde wordes newe.
He may nat spare, althogh he were his brother,
He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak himself ful brode in hooly writ,

7

And wel ye woot no vileynye is it.
 Eek Plato seith, whoso that kan hym rede,
 The wordes moote be cosyn to the dede.
 Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
 Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
 Heere in this tale, as that they sholde stonde;
 My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

GREET chiere made oure hoost us
 everichon,
 And to the soper sette he us anon,
 And served us with vitaille at the
 beste.
 Strong was the wyn, & wel to drynke
 us leste.

The
 Hooste

ASEMELY man oure hooste was
 withalle
 for to han been a marchal in an halle.
 A large man he was with eyen stepe,
 A fairer burgeys was ther noon in
 Chepe;

Boold of his speche, and wys and well ytaught,
 And of manhod hym lakkede right naught.
 Eek therto he was right a myrie man,
 And after soper pleyen he bigan,
 And spak of myrthe amonges othere thynges,
 Whan that we hadde maad our rekenynges;
 And seyde thus. Now lordynges, trewely,
 Ye been to me right welcome hertely;
 for by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
 I saugh nat this yeer so myrie a compaignye
 Atones in this herberwe as is now;
 fayn wolde I doon yow myrthe, wiste I how.
 And of a myrthe I am right now bythoght,
 To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.
 Ye goon to Canterbury, God yow speede,
 The blisful martir quite yow youre meede.
 And wel I woot as ye goon by the weye
 Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;
 for trewely, confort ne myrthe is noon
 To ride by the weye doun as the stoon;
 And therefore wol I maken yow disport,
 As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.
 And if yow liketh alle, by oon assent,
 How for to stonden at my juggement,
 And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
 Tomorwe, whan ye riden by the weye,
 Now by my fader soule that is deed,
 But ye be myrie, I wol yeve yow myn heed.
 Hoold up youre hond, withouten moore speche.
 Oure conseil was nat longe for to seche;
 As thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys,
 And graunted hym withouten moore avys,
 And bad him seye his voirdit as hym leste.
 Lordynges, quod he, now herketh for the beste,
 But taak it nought, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
 This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,
 That eche of yow, to shorte with oure weye,
 In this viage shal telle tales tweye,
 To Caunterburyward, I mene it so,
 And homward he shal tellen othere two,
 Of aventures that whilom han bifalle.
 And which of yow that bereth hym best of alle,
 That is to seyn, that telleth in this caas
 Tales of best sentence and moost solas,

Shal have a soper at oure aller cost
 heere in this place, sittynge by this post,
 Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
 And for to make yow the moore mury,
 I wol myselve goodly with yow ryde
 Right at myn owene cost, and be youre gyde,
 And whoso wole my juggement withseye,
 Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
 And if ye vouchesauf that it be so,
 Tel me anon, withouten wordes mo,
 And I wol erly shape me therfore.
 This thyng was graunted, and oure othes swore
 With ful glad herte, and preyden hym also
 That he wold vouchesauf for to do so,
 And that he wolde been oure governour,
 And of our tales juge and reportour,
 And sette a soper at a certeyn pris;
 And we wol reuled been at his devys
 In heigh and lough; and thus by oon assent,
 We been accorded to his juggement.
 And therupon the wyn was fet anon;
 We dronken, and to reste wente echon
 Withouten any lenger taryngne.

MORWE, whan that day gan for to
 sprynge,
 Up roos oure hoost and was oure
 aller cok.
 And gadrede us togidre alle in a flok,
 And forth we riden, a litel moore than

paas,
 Unto the wateryng of Seint Thomas;
 And there oure hoost bigan his hors areste,
 And seyde. Lordynges, herketh if yow leste:
 Ye woot youre forward, and I it yow recorde.
 If evensong and morweson accorded,
 Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.
 As evere mote I drynke wyn or ale,
 Whoso be rebel to my juggement
 Shal paye for al that by the wey is spent.
 Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twynne;
 He which that hath the shorteste shal bigynne.
 Sire Knyght, quod he, my mayster and my lord,
 Now draweth cut, for that is myn accord.
 Cometh neer, quod he, my lady Prioressse,
 And ye, sire Clerk, lat be your shamesfastnesse,
 Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man.
 Anon to drawen every wight bigan,
 And shortly for to tellen as it was,
 Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas.
 The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knyght,
 Of which ful blithe and glad was every wyght;
 And telle he moste his tale as was resoun,
 By forward and by composicioun,
 As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?
 And whan this goode man saugh it was so,
 As he that wys was and obedient
 To kepe his forward by his free assent,
 He seyde. Syn I shal bigynne the game,
 What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!
 Now lat us ryde, and herketh what I seye.
 And with that word we ryden forth oure weye;
 And he bigan with right a myrie cheere
 His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

Heere endith the prolog of this book.

HEERE BIGYNNETH THE KNYGHTES TALE
 JAMQUE DOMOS PATRIAS, SCITHICE POST ASPERA GENTIS PROELIA
 LAURIGERO, et cetera (Stat. Theb. xii. 519.)



AS OLDE STORIES TELLEN US,
 Ther was a duc that highte Theseus;
 Of Atthenes he was lord and governour,
 And in his tyme swich a conquerour,
 That gretter was ther noon under the sonne.

ful many a riche contree hadde he wonne;
 That with his wysdom and his chivalrye
 He conquered al the regne of femenye,
 That whilom was ycleped Scithia;
 And weddede the queene Ypolita,
 And broghte hire hoom with hym in his contree
 With muchel glorie and greet solemnytee,
 And eek hir faire suster Emelye.
 And thus with victorie and with melodye
 Lete I this noble duc to Atthenes ryde,
 And al his hoost, in armes hym bisyde.
 And certes, if it nere to long to heere,
 I wolde have toold yow fully the manere,
 How wonnen was the regne of femenye
 By Theseus, and by his chivalrye;
 And of the grete bataille for the nones
 Bitwixen Atthenes and Amazones;
 And how asseged was Ypolita,
 The faire hardy queene of Scithia;
 And of the feste that was at hir weddyng,
 And of the tempest at hir hoom comyng;
 But al that thyng I moot as now forbere.
 I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,
 And wayke been the oxen in my plough.

The remenant of the tale is long ynough:

I wol nat letten eek noon of this route;
Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute,
And lat se now who shal the soper wynne,
And ther I lefte, I wol ageyne bigynne.

THIS duc, of whom I make mencion,
Whan he was come almoost unto the toun,
In al his wele, and in his mooste pride,
He was war, as he caste his eye aside,
Where that ther kneled in the hye weye
A compaignye of ladies, tweye and tweye,
Ech after oother clad in clothes blake;
But swich a cry and swich a wo they make,
That in this world nys creature lvyngne,
That herde swich another waymentynge:
And of this cry they nolde nevere stenten,
Til they the reynes of his brydel henten.

What folk been ye, that at myn hom comynge
Perturben so my feste with cryngne?
Quod Theseus: Have ye so greet envye
Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and crye?
Or who hath yow mysboden or offended?
And telleth me if it may been amended;
And why that ye been clothed thus in blak?

The eldest lady of hem alle spak
Whan she hadde swowned with a deedly cheere,
That it was routhe for to seen and heere,
And seyde, Lord, to whom fortune hath yyven
Victorie, and as a conqueror to lyven,
Nat greveth us youre glorie and youre honour,
But we biseken mercy and socour.

Have mercy on oure wo and oure distresse;
Some drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentillesse,
Upon us wretched wommen lat thou falle;
for certes, lord, there is noon of us alle
That she nath been a duchesse or a queene;
Now be we caytyves, as it is wel seene:
Thanked be fortune, and hire false wheel,
That noon estat assureth to be weel.

And certes, lord, to abyden youre presence,
Heere in the temple of the goddessse Clemence
We han ben waitynge al this fourtenyght;
Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy myght.

I wrecche, which that wepe and waille thus,
Was whilom wyf to kyng Cappaneus,
That starf at Thebes, cursed be that day;
And alle we that been in this array,
And maken al this lamentacioun,
We losten alle oure housbondes at that toun,
Whil that the seege therabout lay.

And yet the olde Creon, weylaway!
That lord is now of Thebes the citee,
fulfild of ire and of iniquitee,
He, for despit, and for his tyrannye,
To do the dede bodyes vileynye,
Of alle oure lordes, whiche that been slawe,
Hath alle the bodyes on an heepe ydrawe,
And wol nat suffren hem, by noon assent,
Neither to been ybured nor ybrent,
But maketh houndes ete hem in despit.

And with that word, withouten moore respit,
They fillen gruf, and criden pitously,
Have on us wretched wommen som mercy,

And lat oure sorwe synken in thyn herte.

This gentil duc down from his courser sterte
With herte pitous, whan he herde hem speke,
Hym thoughte that his herte wolde breke,
Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so maat,
That whilom weren of so greet estaat;
And in his armes he hem alle up hente,
And hem conforteth in ful good entente;
And swoor his ooth, as he was trewe knyght,
He wolde doon so ferforthly his myght
Upon the tiraunt Creon hem to wreke,
That al the peple of Grece sholde speke
How Creon was of Theseus yserved,
As he that hadde his deeth ful wel deserved.

AND right anon, withouten moore abood,
His baner he desplayeth, and forth rood
To Thebesward, and al his hoost beside;
No neer Atthenes wolde he go ne ride,
Ne take his ese fully half a day,
But onward on his wey that nyght he lay;
And sente anon Ypolita the queene,
And Emelye hir yonge suster sheene,
Unto the toun of Atthenes to dwelle,
And forth he rit; ther is namoore to telle.

The rede statue of Mars with spere and targe
So shyneth in his white baner large,
That alle the feeldes glyteren up and down;
And by his baner born is his penoun
Of gold ful riche, in which ther was ybete
The Mynotaur, which that he slough in Crete.

THUS rit this duc, thus rit this conquerour,
And in his hoost of chivalrie the flour,
Til that he cam to Thebes, and alighte
faire in a feild, ther as he thoughte fighte.

But shortly for to speken of this thyng
With Creon, which that was of Thebes kyng,
He faught, and slough hym manly as a knyght
In pleyn bataille, and putte the folk to flyght;
And by assaut he wan the citee after,
And rente adoun bothe wall, and sparre, & rafter;
And to the ladies he restored agayn
The bones of hir housbondes that were slayn,
To doon obsequies, as was tho the gyse.

BUT it were al to long for to devyse
The grete clamour and the waymentynge
Which that the ladies made at the brennyngne
Of the bodyes, and the grete honour
That Theseus, the noble conquerour,
Dooth to the ladies whan they from hym wente.

But shortly for to telle is myn entente;
Whan that this worthy duc, this Theseus,
Hath Creon slayn, and wonne Thebes thus,
Stille in that feild he took al nyght his reste,
And dide with al the contree as hym leste.

Oransake in the taas of bodyes dede,
Hem for to strepe of harneys and of wede,
The pilours didnen bisynesse and cure,
After the bataille and disconfiture.

And so bifel that in the taas they founde,
Thurghgirt with many a grevous bloody wounde,
Two yonge knyghtes, liggyng by and by,
Bothe in oon armes, wrought ful richely,
Of whiche two, Arcite highte that oon,

And that oother knyght highte Palamon.
Nat fully quyke, ne fully dede they were,
But by here cote/armures, and by hir gere,
The heraudes knewe hem best in special,
As they that weren of the blood roial
Of Thebes, and of susteren two yborn.
Out of the taas the pilours han hem torn,
And han hem caried softe unto the tente
Of Theseus, and ful soone he hem sente
To Atthenes, to dwellen in prisoun
Perpetuelly; he nolde no raunsoun.
And whan this worthy duc hath thus ydon,
He took his hoost, and boom he rood anon,
With laurer crowned as a conquerour;
And ther he lyveth in joye and in honour
Terme of his lyve; what nedeth wordes mo?
And in a tour, in angwyssh and in wo,
This Palamon, and his felawe Arcite,
for evermoore, ther may no gold hem quite.

THIS passeth yer by yer, and day by day,
Till it fil ones, in a morwe of May,
That Emelye, that fairer was to sene
Than is the lylie upon his stalke grene,
And fressher than the May with floures newe,
for with the rose colour stroof hire hewe,
Inoot which was the fyner of hem two,
Er it were day, as was hir wone to do,
She was arisen, and al redy dight;
for May wole have no slogardrie anyght,
The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh hym out of his slepe to sterte.

And seith Arys, and do thyn observaunce.
This maketh Emelye have remembrance
To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.
Yclothed was she fresshe, for to devyse;
hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse
Bihynde hir bak a yerde long, I gesse.
And in the gardyn at the sonne upriste,
She walketh up and down, and as hire liste
She gadereth floures, party white and rede,
To make a subtil gerland for hire hede,
And as an aungel, hevenysshly she soong.

THE grete tour that was so thikke & stroong,
Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun,
Theras the knyghtes weren in prisoun,
Of whiche I tolde yow, and tellen shal,
Was evene joynant to the gardyn wal,
Theras this Emelye hadde hir pleyynge.

RIGHT was the sonne, and cleer that
morwenyngne,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, bi leve of his gayler,
Was risen, and romed in a chambre an heigh,
In which he al the noble citee seigh,
And eek the gardyn ful of braunches grene,
Theras this fresshe Emelye the sheene
Was in hire walk, and romed up and down.

This sorweful prisoner, this Palamon,
Goth in the chambre, romynge to and fro,
And to hymself compleynynge of his wo;
That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, alas!
And so bifel, by aventure or cas,
That thurgh a wyndow, thikke of many a barre

Of iren, greet and square as any sparre,
He cast his eye upon Emelya,
And therwithal he bleynte and cryed, Al
As though he stongen were unto the herte.
And with that cry Arcite anon upsterte,
And seyde, Cosyn myn, what eyleth thee,
That art so pale and deedly on to see?
Why cridestow? Who hath thee doon offence?
for Goddes love, taak al in pacience
Oure prisoun, for it may noon oother be;
fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.
Somme wikke aspect or disposicioun
Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun,
Hath yeven us this, although we hadde it sworn,
So stood the hevene whan that we were born;
We moste endure: this is the short and playn.

This Palamon answerde, and seyde agayn,
Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun
Thow hast a veyn ymaginacioun;
This prison caused me nat for to crye,
But I was hurt right now thurghout myn eye
Into myn herte, that wol my bane be.
The fairnesse of that lady that I see
Yond in the gardyn romen to and fro,
Is cause of al my crying and my wo.
I noot wher she be womman or goddessse;
But Venus is it, soothly, as I gesse.

And therwithal on knees down he fil,
And seyde, Venus, if it be thy wil
Yow in this gardyn thus to transfigure
Bifore me, sorweful wrecche creature,
Out of this prisoun helpe that we may scapen.
And if so be my destynce be shapen
By eterne word, to dyen in prisoun,
Of our lynage have som compassioun,
That is so lowe ybrought by tyrannye.

And with that word Arcite gan espie
Wheras this lady romed to and fro;
And with that sighte hir beautee hurte hym so,
That if that Palamon was wounded sore,
Arcite is hurt as moche as he, or moore;
And with a sigh he seyde pitously:
The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly
Of hire that rometh in the yonder place,
And but I have hir mercy and hir grace
That I may seen hire atte leeste weye
I nam but deed; ther is namoore to seye.

THIS Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,
Dispitously he looked and answerde,
Whether seistow this in earnest or in pley?

Nay, quod Arcite, in earnest, by my fey!
God helpe me so, me list ful yvele pleye.
This Palamon gan knytte his browes tweye,
It nere, quod he, to thee no greet honour,
for to be fals, ne for to be traitour
To me, that am thy cosyn and thy brother
Ysworn ful depe, and ech of us til oother,
That nevere for to dyen in the peyne,
Till that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,
Neither of us in love to hyndre oother
Ne in noon oother cas, my leewe brother,
But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me
In every cas, as I shal forthren thee.

This was thyn ooth, and myn also certeyn;
I woot right wel thou darst it nat withseyne.
Thus artow of my conseil, out of doute:
And now thou woldest falsly been aboute
To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
And evere shal, til that myn herte sterve.
Nay, certes, false Arcite, thou shalt nat so;
I loved hire first, and tolde thee my wo
As to my conseil, and my brother sworn
To forthre me, as I have toold biforn.
For which thou art ybounden as a knyght
To helpen me, if it lay in thy myght,
Or elles artow fals, I dar wel seyn.
THIS Arcite ful proudly spak ageyn;
Thow shalt, quod he, be rather fals than I,
And thou art fals, I telle thee, outrely,
for par amour I loved hire first er thow.
What wiltow seyn? thou wistest nat yet now
Whether she be a womman or goddesse.
Thyn is affection of hooolynesse,
And myn is love as to a creature,
for which I tolde thee myn aventure
As to my cosyn and my brother sworn.
I pose that thou lovedest hire biforn,
Mostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,
That who shal yeve a love any lawe?
Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan,
Than may be yeve of any erthely man?
And therefore positif lawe and swich decree
Is broken al day for love in ech degree.
A man moot nedes love maugree his heed;
He may nat flee it, thogh he sholde be deed,
Al be she mayde, or wydwe, or elles wyf;
And eek it is nat likly al thy lyf
To stonden in hir grace, namoore shal I;
for wel thou woost, thyselfen verrailly,
That thou and I be dampned to prisoun
Perpetuelly; us gayneth no raunsoun.
We stryven as dide the boundes for the boon,
They foughte al day, and yet hir part was noon;
Ther cam a kyte, whil they weren so wrothe,
And baar away the boon bitwixe hem bothe;
And therefore, at the kynges court, my brother,
Ech man for hymself, ther is noon oother.
Love, if thee list, for I love and ay shal,
And soothly, leewe brother, this is al.
Heere in this prisoun moote we endure
And everich of us take his aventure.
REEC was the strif, and long, bitwix hem
tweye,
If that I hadde leyser for to seye;
But to the effect, It happed on a day,
To telle it yow as shortly as I may,
A worthy duc, that highte Perotheus,
That felawe was unto duc Theseus,
Syn thilke day that they were children lite,
Was come to Atthenes, his felawe to visite,
And for to pleye, as he was wont to do;
for in this world he loved no man so,
And he loved hym als tendrely agayn.
So wel they lovede, as old bookes sayn,
That whan that oon was deed, soothly to telle,
His felawe wente and soughte hym doun in helle;

But of that storie list me nat to write.
Duc Perotheus loved wel Arcite,
And hadde hym knowe at Thebes yeer by yeer;
And finally, at request and preyere
Of Perotheus, withoute any raunsoun,
Duc Theseus hym leet out of prisoun
frelly to goon wher that hym liste over al,
In swich a gyse as I you tellen shal.
THIS was the forward, pleyntly for tendite,
Bitwixen Theseus and hym Arcite;
That if so were that Arcite were yfounde,
Evere in his lif, by day or nyght, o stounde,
In any contree of this Theseus,
And he were caught, it was acorded thus,
That with a swerd he sholde lese his heed:
Ther nas noon oother remedie, ne reed,
But taketh his leve and homward he him spedde;
Lat hym be war, his nekke lith to wedde.
How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!
The deeth he feeleth thurgh his herte smyte;
He wepeth, wayleth, crieth pitously;
To sleen hymself he waiteth prively.
He seyde, **A**llas that day that I was born!
Now is my prisoun worse than biforn;
Now is me shape eternally to dwelle,
Nat in my purgatorie, but in helle.
Allas that evere knew I Perotheus!
for elles hadde I dwelled with Theseus
Yfetered in his prisoun everemo.
Thanne hadde I been in blisse, and nat in wo,
Only the sighte of hire whom that I serve,
Though that I nevere hir grace may deserve,
Wolde han suffised right ynough for me.
O deere cosyn Palamon, quod he,
Thyn is the victorie of this aventure
ful blisfully in prison maistow dure,
In prisoun? certes nay, but paradys!
Wel hath fortune yturned thee the dys,
That hast the sighte of hire and I thabsence,
for possible is, syn thou hast hire presence,
And art a knyght, a worthy and an able,
That by som cas, syn fortune is chaungeable,
Thow maist to thy desir some tyme atteyne,
But I, that am exiled and bareyne
Of alle grace, and in so greet dispeire,
That ther nys erthe, water, fyr, ne air,
Ne creature, that of hem makid is,
That may me heele, or doon confort in this.
Wel oughte I sterve in wanhope and distresse;
farwel, my lif, my lust and my gladnesse.
Allas, why pleyen folk so in commune
Of purveiaunce of God, or of fortune,
That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse
Wel bettre than they kan hemself devyse?
Som man desireth for to han richesse,
That cause is of his mordre, or greet siknesse;
And som man wolde out of his prisoun fayn,
That in his hous is of his meynce slayn.
Infinite harmes been in this mateere,
We witen nat what thing we preyen heere.
We faren as he that dronke is as a mous.
A dronke man woot wel he hath an hous,
But he noot which the righte wey is thider,

And to a dronke man the wey is slider;
And certes in this world so faren we,
We seken faste after felicitie,
But we goon wrong ful often trewely.
Thus may we seyen alle, and namely I,
That wende and hadde a greet opinioun
That if I myghte escapen from prisoun,
Thanne hadde I been in joye and perfet heele,
That now I am exiled fro my wele.
Syn that I may nat seen you, Emelye,
Inam but deed, there nys no remedye.
UPON that oother syde, Palamon,
Whan that he wiste Arcite was agon,
Swich sorwe he maketh that the grete tour
Resouned of his youlyng and clamour;
The pure fettres on his shynys grete
Weren of his bittre, salte teeres wete.
Allas! quod he, Arcite, cosyn myn,
Of al our strif, God woot, the fruyt is thyn;
Thow walkest now in Thebes at thy large,
And of my wo thou yevest litel care,
Thou mayst, syn thou hast wysdom & man hede,
Assemblen alle the folk of oure kynrede,
And make a werre so sharpe on this citee,
That by som aventure, or som tretee,
Thow mayst have hire to lady and to wyf
for whom that I mot nedes lese my lyf.
for as by wey of possibilitee,
Sith thou art at thy large, of prisoun free,
And art a lord, greet is thyn avauntage,
Moore than is myn that sterve here in a cage;
for I moot wepe and wayle whil I lyve,
With al the wo that prison may me yeve,
And eek with peyne that love me yeveth also,
That doubleth al my torment and my wo.
Therwith the fyr of jalousie up sterte
Withinne his brest, and hente him by the herte
So woodly, that he lyk was to biholde
The boxtree, or the asshe, dede and colde.
Thanne seyde he, **O** cruel goddes that governe
This world with byndyng of youre word eterne
And writen in the table of atthamaunt
Your parlement and youre eterne graunt,
What is mankynde moore unto you holde
Than is the sheepe that rouketh in the folde?
for slayn is man, right as another beest,
And dwelleth eek in prison and arreest,
And hath siknesse and greet adversitee.
And ofte tymes gilteles pardee.
What governance is in this prescience,
That gilteles tormenteth innocence?
And yet encresseth this al my penaunce,
That man is bounden to his observaunce
for Goddes sake to letten of his wille,
Ther as a beest may all his lust fulfille;
And whan a beest is deed he hath no peyne,
But after his deeth man moot wepe and pleyne,
Though in this world he have care and wo,
Withouten doute may it stonden so.
The answer of this lete I to dyvynys,
But well I woot that in this world greet pyne ys.
Allas! I se a serpent or a theef,
That many a trewe man hath doon mescheef,

Goon at his large, and where hym list may turne;
But I moot been in prisoun thurgh Saturne,
And eek thurgh Juno, jalous and eek wood,
That hath destroyed wel ny al the blood
Of Thebes with his waste walles wyde;
And Venus sleeth me on that oother syde
for jalousie and fere of hym Arcite.
NOW wol I stynte of Palamon a lite
And lete hym in his prisoun stille dwelle,
And of Arcite forth I wol yow telle.
The somer passeth, and the nyghtes longe
Encressen double wise the peynes stronge
Bothe of the love and the prisoner.
I noot which hath the wofuller mester;
for shortly for to seyn, this Palamon
Perpetuelly is dampned to prisoun
In cheynes and in fettres to been deed,
And Arcite is exiled upon his heed
for evere mo as out of that contree,
Ne nevere mo he shal his lady see.
Yow loveres, axe I now this questioun,
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamon?
That oon may seen his lady day by day,
But in prisoun he moot dwellen alway;
That oother, wher hym list may ride or go,
But seen his lady shal he nevere mo.
Now demeth as yow liste, ye that kan,
for I wol telle forth as I bigan.

Explicit pars prima. Sequitur pars secunda.

WHAN that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
ful ofte a day he swelte
and seyde, **A**llas!
for seen his lady shal he
nevere mo.
And, shortly to concluden
al his wo,
So muche sorwe had
nevere creature
That is or shal, whil that the world may dure.
His slepe, his mete, his drynke, is hym biraft,
That lene he wexe and drye as is a shaft;
His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde,
His hewe falow and pale as asshe colde,
And solitarie he was and evere allone,
And waillynge al the nyght, makynge his mone:
And if he herde song or instrument
Thanne wolde he wepe, he myghte nat be stent;
So feble eek were his spirits and so lowe,
And chaunged so that no man koude knowe
His speche nor his voys, though men it herde
And in his geere for al the world he ferde,
Nat oonly like the loveris maladye
Of hereos, but rather lyk manye
Engendred of humour malencolik
Biforn his owene celle fantastik.
And shortly turned was al up so doun
Bothe habit and eek disposicioun
Of hym, this woful love daum Arcite.
WHAT sholde I al day of his wo endite?
Whan he endured hadde a yeer or two
This cruel torment and this peyne & woo,
At Thebes, in his contree, as I seyde,

Upon a nyght in sleepe as he hym leyde,
Hym thoughte how that the wynged god Mercurie
Biform hym stood and bad hym to be murie;
His slepy yerde in hond he bar uprighte,
An hat he werede upon hise heris brighte.
Arrayed was this god, as he took keepe,
As he was whan that Argus took his sleepe,
And seyde hym thus, To Atthenes shaltow wende,
Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende.
And with that word Arcite wook and sterte,
Now trewely how soore that me smerte,
Quod he, To Atthenes right now wol I fare,
Ne for the drede of deeth shal I nat spare
To se my lady that I love and serve;
In hir presence I recche nat to sterve.
And with that word he caughte a greet mirroure
And saugh that chaunged was al his colour
And saugh his visage al in another kynde;
And right anon it ran hym in his mynde,
That sith his face was so disfigured
Of maladye, the which he hadde endured,
He myghte wel, if that he bar hym lowe,
Lyve in Atthenes evermore unknowe,
And seen his lady wel ny day by day.
And right anon he chaunged his array,
And cladde hym as a poure laborer,
And at allone, save oonly a squier
That knew his privetee and al his cas,
Which was disguised povrely as he was,
To Atthenes is he goon the nexte way.
And to the court he wente upon a day,
And at the gate he profreth his servyse
To drugge and drawe, what so men wol devyse.
And shortly of this matere for to seyn,
He fil in office with a chamberleyn,
The which that dwellynge was with Emelye,
for he was wys, and koude soone espye
Of every servaunt which that serveth here.
Wel koude he hewen wode, and water bere,
for he was yong and myghty for the nones,
And therto he was long and big of bones
To doon that any wight kan hym devyse.
YEER or two he was in this servyse,
Page of the chambre of Emelye the brighte,
And Philostrate he seyde that he highte.
But half so wel beloved a man as he
Ne was ther nevere in court of his degree;
He was so gentil of condicioun
That thurghout al the court was his renoun.
They seyden that it were a charitee
That Theseus wolde enhauncen his degree,
And putten hym in worshipful servyse,
Theras he myghte his vertu exercise.
And thus withinne a while his name is spronge,
Bothe of his dedes and his goode tonge,
That Theseus hath taken hym so neer,
That of his chambre he made hym a squier,
And yaf him gold to mayntene his degree;
And eek men broghte hym out of his contree,
from yeer to yeer, ful pryvely, his rente;
But honestly and slyly he it spente,
That no man wondred how that he it hadde.
And thre yeer in this wise his lif he ladde

And bar hym so in pees, and eek in werre,
Ther was no man that Theseus hath derre.
AND in this blisse lete I now Arcite
And speke I wole of Palamon a lite.
In derknesse horrible, and strong prison
Thise seven yeer hath seten Palamon.
forpynd, what for wo and for distresse;
Who feeleth double soor and hevynesse
But Palamon? that love destreyne so,
That woot out of his wit he goth for wo;
And eek therto he is a prisoner
Perpetuely, nocht oonly for a yer.
Who koude ryme in Englyssh proprely
His martirdom? forsothe it am nat I;
Therefore I passe as lightly as I may.
I fel that in the seventh yer in May,
The thridde nyght, as olde bookes seyn
That al this storie tellen moore pleyn,
Were it by aventure or destynce,
As whan a thyng is shapen it shal be,
That soone after the mydnyght, Palamon,
By helpyng of a freend brak his prisoun
And fleeth the citee faste as he may go,
for he hade yeve his gayler drynke so
Of a claree, maad of a certeyn wyn,
Of necrotikes, and opie of Thebes fyn,
That al that nyght, thogh that men wolde him
shake,
The gayler sleepe, he myghte nat awake.
And thus he fleeth, as faste as evere he may.
The nyght was short, and faste by the day,
That nedes cost he moot himselfen hyde,
And til a grove faste ther bisyde,
With dredeful foot than stalketh Palamon.
for shortly, this was his opinioun,
That in that grove he wolde hym hyde al day,
And in the nyght thanne wolde he take his way
To Thebesward, his freendes for to preye
On Theseus to helpe him to werreye;
And shortly, outhur he wolde lese his lif
Or wynnen Emelye unto his wyf.
This is the effect, and his entente pleyn.
Now wol I turne to Arcite ageyn,
That litel wiste how ny that was his care,
Til that fortune had broght him in the snare.
The bisy larke, messenger of day,
Salueth in hir song the morwe gray,
And fry Phebus riseth up so brighte
That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,
And with his stremes dryeth in the greves
The silver dropes, hangyng on the leves.
And Arcite that is in the court roial,
With Theseus, his squier principal,
Is risen, and looketh on the myrie day;
And for to doon his observaunce to May,
Remembryng on the poynt of his desir,
He on a courser, startlyng as the fir,
Is riden in to the feeldes hym to pleye.
Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye;
And to the grove of which that I yow tolde,
By aventure, his wey he gan to holde,
To maken hym a gerland of the greves,
Were it of wodebynde, or hawethorn leves,



And loud he song ageyn the sonne shene:
AY, with alle thy floures & thy grene,
Welcome be thou, faire, fresshe May,
In hope that I som grene gete may.
And from his courser with a lusty herte
Into a grove ful hastily he sterte,
And in a path he rometh up and down,
Theras by aventure this Palamon
Was in a buss, that no man myghte hym se,
for soore afered of his deeth was he.
Nothyng ne knew he that it was Arcite,
God woot he wolde have trowed it ful lite.
But sooth is seyde, gon sithen many yeres,
That feeld hath eyen, & the wode hath eres;
It is ful fair a man to bere hym evene,
for al day meeteth men at unset stevene.
ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe
That was so ny to herknen al his sawe,
for in the buss he sitteth now ful stille.
And that Arcite hadde romed al his
fille,
And songen al the roundel lustily,
Into a studie he fil all sodeynly,
As doon thise lovers in hir queynte geres,
Now in the crope, now down in the breres,
Now up, now down, as boket in a welle.
Right as the Friday, soothly for to telle,
Now it shyneth, and now it reyneth faste,

Right so kan geery Venus overcaste
The hertes of hir folk; right as hir day
Is gereful, right so chaungeth she array,
Selde is the Friday al the wowke ylike.
Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan to sike,
And sette hym down withouten any moore:
Allas, quod he, that day that I was bore!
How longe, Juno, thurgh thy crueltee,
Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?
Allas, ybroght is to confusioun
The blood roial of Cadme and Amphion,
Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man
That Thebes bulte, or first the toun bigan,
And of the citee first was crowned kyng;
Of his lynage am I, and his ofspryng
By verray ligne, as of the stok roial;
And now I am so caytyf and so thral,
That he that is my mortal enemy,
I serve hym as his squier povrely.
And yet dooth Juno me wel moore shame,
for I dar noght biknowe myn owene name,
But theras I was wont to highte Arcite,
Now highte I Philostrate, nocht worth a myte.
Allas, thou felle Mars! allas, Juno!
Thus bath youre ire oure kynrede al fordo,
Save oonly me, and wrecched Palamon,
That Theseus martireth in prisoun.
And over al this, to sleen me outrely,

Love hath his fry dart so brennyngly
Ystiked thurgh my trewe, careful herte,
That shapen was my deeth erst than my sherte.
Ye sleen me with youre eyen, Emelye;
Ye been the cause wherfore that I dye.
Of al the remenant of myn oother care
Ne sette I nat the montance of a tare,
So that I koude doon aught to youre plesaunce.

AND with that word he fil down in a traunce
A longe tyme, and after he upsterte.
This Palamoun, that thoughte that
thurgh his herte

He felte a coold swerd sodeynliche glyde,
for ire he quook, no lenger wolde he byde.
And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
As he were wood, with face deed and pale,
He sturte hym up out of the buskes thikke,
And seide, Arcite, false traytour wikke!
Now artow hent, that lovest my lady so,
for whom that I have al this peyne and wo,
And art my blood and to my conseil sworn,
As I ful ofte have seyde thee heer biforn,
And hast byjaped heere duc Theseus,
And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus;
I wol be deed, or elles thou shalt dye;
Thou shalt nat love my lady Emelye,
But I wol love hire oonly, and namo,
for I am Palamon, thy mortal foo;
And though that I no wepne have in this place,
But out of prison am astert by grace,
I drede noght, that outhur thouw shalt dye,
Or thouw ne shalt nat loven Emelye.
Chees which thou wolt or thou shalt nat asterte!

THIS Arcite, with ful despitous herte,
Whan he hym knew, and hadde his tale herd,
As fiers as leoun pulled out his swerd,
And seyde thus, By God that sit above,
Nere it that thou art sik and wood for love,
And eek that thouw no wepne hast in this place,
Thou sholdest nevere out of this grove pace,
That thouw ne sholdest dyen of myn bond;
for I defye the seurete and the bond
Which that thou seist that I have maad to thee.
What, verray fool, thyngk wel that love is fre,
And I wol love hire mawgree al thy myght.
But for as muche thou art a worthy knyght,
And wilnest to darreyne hire by bataille,
Have heer my trouthe, tomorwe I wol nat faille,
Withoute wityng of any oother wight,
That heere I wol be founden as a knyght,
And bryngen harnays right ynough for thee
And chese the beste and leve the worste for me;
And mete and drynke this nyght wol I brynge
Ynough for thee, and clothes for thy beddyng;
And if so be that thouw my lady wyne
And sle me in this wode ther I am inne,
Thou mayst wel have thy lady as for me.

THIS Palamon answerde, I graunte it thee.
And thus they been departed til amorwe,
Whan ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe.

CAPIDE, out of alle charitee!
O regne, that wolt no felawe have with thee!
ful sooth is seyde that love ne lordshipe

Wol noght, hir thanks, have no felaweshipe.
Wel fynden that Arcite and Palamoun.
Arcite is riden anon unto the toun,
And on the morwe, er it were dayes light,
ful prively two harnays hath he dight,
Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne
The bataille in the feild bitwix hem tweyne;
And on his hors, allone as he was born,
He carieth al the harnays hym biforn,
And in the grove, at tyme and place yset,
This Arcite and this Palamon ben met.
To chaungen gan the colour in hir face,
Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace,
That stondeth at the gappe with a spere,
Whan hunted is the leoun or the bere,
And hereth hym come russhyng in the greves
And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,
And thynketh: Heere cometh my mortal enemy,
Withoute faile he moot be deed or I;
for outhur I moot sleen hym at the gappe,
Or he moot sleen me if that me myshappe.
So ferden they in chaungyng of hir hewe,
As fer as everich of hem oother knewe.
Ther nas no Good day, ne no saluynge,
But straight withouten word or rehersyng
Everich of hem heelped for to armen oother,
As frendly as he were his owene brother;
And after that, with sharpe speres stronge,
They foynen ech at oother wonder longe.
Thouw myghtest wene that this Palamoun,
In his fighyng were as a wood leoun,
And as a cruel tigre was Arcite:
As wilde bores gonne they to smyte,
That frothen whit as foom for ire wood,
Up to the ancle foghete they in hir blood.
And in this wise I lete hem fighyng dwelle,
And forth I wole of Theseus yow telle.

THIS Destinee, ministre general,
That executeth in the world over al
The purveiaunce that God hath seyn biforn;
So strong it is that though the world had sworn
The contrarie of a thyng by ye or nay,
Yet sometyne it shal fallen on a day
That falleth nat eft withinne a thousand yeere.
for certainly oure appetites heere,
Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,
Al is this reuled by the sighte above.
This mene I now by myghty Theseus,
That for to hunt is so desirus,
And namely at the grete hert in May,
That in his bed ther daweth hym no day
That he nys clad, and redy for to ryde
With hunte and horne, and boundes hym bisyde.
for in his huntynge bath he swich delit,
That it is al his joye and appetit
To been hymself the grete hertes bane,
for after Mars he serveth now Dyane.

THIS was the day, as I have toold er this,
And Theseus, with alle joye and blis,
With his Ypolita, the faire quene,
And Emelye, clothed al in grene,
On huntynge be they riden roially;
And to the grove that stood ful faste by,

In which ther was an hert, as men hym tolde,
Duc Theseus the streight wey hath holde.
And to the launde he rideth hym ful right,
for thider was the hert wont have his flight,
And over a brook, and so forth in his weye.
This duc wol han a cours at hym or tweye
With boundes, swiche as that hym list comaunde.
And whan this duc was come unto the launde,
Under the sonne he looketh, and anon,
He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
That fougheten brems, as it were bores two.
The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro
So hidously, that with the leeste strook
It semed as it wolde felle an ook;
But what they were, nothing he ne woot.
This duc his courser with his spores smoot,
And at a stert he was bitwix hem two,
And pulled out a swerd, and cride, hoo!
Namoore, up peyne of lesyng of youre heed.
By myghty Mars, he shal anon be deed
That smyteth any strook, that I may seen!
But telleth me what myster men ye been,
That been so hardy for to figheten heere
Withouten juge or oother officer,
As it were in a lystes roially?
This Palamon answerde hastily
And seyde, Sire, what nedeth wordes mo?
We have the deeth diserved bothe two.
Two woful wrecches been we, two caytyves,
That been encombred of oure owene tyves;
And as thou art a rightful lord and juge,
Ne yeve us neither mercy ne refuge,
But sle me first, for seinte charitee,
And sle my felawe eek as wel as me;
Or sle hym first; for, though thouw knowest it lite,
This is thy mortal foo, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is banysshed on his heed,
for which he hath deserved to be deed;
for this is he that cam unto thy gate
And seyde that he highte Philostrate.
Thus hath he japed thee ful many a yer,
And thou hast maked hym thy chief squier;
And this is he that loveth Emelye;
for sith the day is come that I shal dye,
I make pleyntly my confessioun,
That I am thiike woful Palamoun,
That hath thy prisoun broken wikkedly.
I am thy mortal foo, and it am I
That loveth so hoot Emelye the brighte,
That I wol dye present in hir sighte.
Therefore I axe deeth and my juwise;
But sle my felawe in the same wise,
for bothe han we deserved to be slayn.
This worthy duc answerde anon agayn,
And seyde, This is a short conclusioun:
Youre owene mouth, by youre confessioun,
Hath dampned yow, and I wol it recorde,
It nedeth noght to pyne yow with the corde,
Ye shal be deed by myghty Mars the rede!
The queene anon, for verray wommanhede,
Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye,
And alle the ladies in the compaignye.
Greet pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,

That evere swich a chaunce sholde falle;
for gentil men they were, of greet estaat,
And nothyng but for love was this debaat,
And saugh hir bloody woundes wyde and soore;
And alle crieden, bothe lasse and moore,
Have mercy, lord, upon us wommen alle!
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,
And wolde have kist his feet ther as he stood,
Til at the laste aslaked was his mood;
for pitee renneth soone in gentil herte.
And though he first for ire quook and sterte,
He hath considered shortly in a clause
The trespas of hem bothe, and eek the cause;
And although that his ire hir gilt accused,
Yet in his resoun he hem bothe excused,
And thus he thoughte wel, that every man
Wol helpe hymself in love if that he kan,
And eek delivere hymself out of prisoun;
And eek his herte hadde compassioun
Of wommen, for they wepen evere in oon;
And in his gentil herte he thoughte anon,
And soft unto hymself he seyde, fy
Upon a lord that wol have no mercy,
But been a leoun bothe in word and dede
To hem that been in repentaunce and drede,
As wel as to a proud despitous man
That wol maynteyne that he first bigan.
That lord hath litel of discrecioun,
That in swich cas kan no divisioun,
But weyeth pride and humblesse after oon.
And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,
He gan to looken up with eyen lighte,
And spak thise same wordes, al on highte.
The god of love, al benedicite,
How myghty and how greet a lord is he!
Ayeys his myght ther gayneth none
obstacles,
He may be cleped a god for his myacles,
for he kan maken, at his owene gyse,
Of everich herte as that hym list divyse.
Lo heere this Arcite, and this Palamoun,
That quytly weren out of my prisoun,
And myghte han lyved in Thebes roially,
And witen I am hir mortal enemy,
And that hir deth lith in my myght also,
And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,
Ybrought hem hyder, bothe for to dye.
Now looketh, is nat that an heigh folye?
Who may nat been a fole, but if he love?
Bihoold, for Goddes sake that sit above,
Se how they blede! be they noght wel arrayed?
Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, ypayed
hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse:
And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse
That serven love, for aught that may bifalle.
But this is yet the beste game of alle,
That she, for whom they han this jolitee,
Kan hem therefore as muche thank as me.
She woot namoore of al this hoot fare,
By God, than woot a cokkow of an hare.
But all moot ben assayed, hoot and coold;
A man moot ben a fool, or yong or coold,
I woot it by myself ful yore agon,

for in my tyme a servant was I oon.
And therefore, syn I knowe of loves peyne,
And woot how soore it kan a man distreynen,
As he that hath ben caught ofte in his laas,
I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespass,
At requeste of the queene, that kneleth heere,
And eek of Emelye, my suster deere.
And ye shul bothe anon unto me swere,
That nevere mo ye shal my contree dere,
Ne make werre upon me, nyght ne day,
But been my freendes in al that ye may;
I yow foryeve this trespass every deel.
And they him sworn his axyng, faire and weel,
And hym of lordshipe and of mercy preyde,
And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde:
TO speke of roial lynage and richesse,
Though that she were a queene or a princesse,
Ech of you bothe is worthy, doutelees,
To wedden whan tyme is, but nathelees,
I speke as for my suster Emelye,
For whom ye have this strif and jalousye,
Ye woot yourselv she may nat wedden two
At ones, though ye fighten everemo:
That oon of you, al be hym looth or lief,
He moot go pipen in an yvy leef:
This is to seyn, she may nat now han bothe,
Al be ye never so jalouse ne so wrothe;
And forthy, I yow putte in this degree,
That ech of yow shal have his destynce
As hym is shape, and herkne in what wyse;
Lo heere your ende of that I shal devyse:
Wyl is this, for plat conclusioun
Withouten any repplacioun,
If that you liketh, take it for the beste,
That everich of you shal goon where hym leste
frely withouten raunson or daunger;
And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner,
Everich of you shal brynge an hundred knyghtes,
Armed for lystes up at alle rightes,
Al redy to darreyn hire by bataille.
And this bihote I yow withouten faille
Upon my trouthe, and as I am a knyght,
That wheither of yow bothe that hath myght,
This is to seyn, that wheither he or thow
May with his hundred, as I spak of now,
Sleen his contrarie, or out of lystes dryve,
Channe shal I yeve Emelye to wyve
To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a grace.
Tho lystes shal I maken in this place,
And God so wisly on my soule rewe
As I shal evene juge been and trewe.
Ye shul noon oother ende with me maken
That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken.
And if yow thynketh this is weel ysaid,
Seyeth youre avys, and holdeth you apayd;
This is youre ende and youre conclusioun.
Who looketh lightly now but Palamoun?
Who spryngeth up for joye but Arcite?
Who kouthe telle, or who kouthe it endite,
The joye that is made in the place
Whan Theseus hath doon so fair a grace?
But down on knees wente every maner wight
And thonken hym with al hir herte and myght;

And namely the Thebans often siþe.
And thus with good hope and with herte blithe
They take hir leve, and homward goone they ride
To Thebes with his olde walles wyde.

Explicit pars secunda. Sequitur pars tertia.



TROWE men wolde deme
it negligence,
If I foryete to tellen the
dispenche
Of Theseus, that gooth so
bisily
To maken up the lystes
roially;
That swich a noble theatre
as it was,

I dar wel seyn that in this world there nas,
The circuit a myle was aboute,
Walled of stoon and dyched al withoute.
Round was the shape in manere of compaas,
ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty paas,
That whan a man was set on a degree,
He lette nat his felawe for to see.
Estward ther stood a gate of marbul whit,
Westward, right swich another in the opposit.
And shortly to concluden, swich a place
Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space;
for in the lond ther was no crafty man
That geometrie or arismetrik kan,
Ne portreitour, ne kervere of ymages,
That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages,
The theatre for to maken and devyse.
And for to doon his ryte and sacrificie,
He estward hath upon the gate above,
In worshippe of Venus, goddessse of love,
Doon make an auter and an oratorie;
And westward, in the mind and in memorie
Of Mars, he maked bath right swich another,
That coste largely of gold a fother.
And northward, in a touret on the wal,
Of alabastre whit and reed coral,
An oratorie riche for to see,
In worshippe of Dyane of chastitee,
Hath Theseus doon wrought in noble wyse.
But yet hadde I foryeten to devyse
The noble kervyng and the portretures,
The shape, the contenance, and the figures,
That weren in these oratories thre.



FIRST, in the temple of Venus maye,
towse,
Wrought on the wal, ful pitous to
biholde,
The broken stipes, and the sikkes
colde,
The sacred teeris, and the waymentyng,
The fry strokes of the desiryng,
That loves servaunts in this lyf enduren;
The othes that hir covenants assuren.
Plesaunce and Hope, Desir, foolhardynesse,
Beautee and Youthe, Bauderie, Richesse,
Charmes and force, Lesynges, flaterye,
Dispense, Bisynesse, and Jalousye
That wered of yelwe gooldes a gerland,
And a cokkow sittynge on hir hand;

festes, instruments, caroles, daunces,
Lust and array, and alle the circumstaunces
Of love, whiche that I reken and rekene shal,
By ordre weren peynted on the wal,
And mo than I kan make of mencion;
for soothly al the mount of Citheroun,
Ther Venus hath hir principal dwellyng,
Was shewed on the wal in portreyng,
With al the gardyn and the lustynesse.
Nat was foryeten the porter Ydelnesse,
Ne Narcissus the faire of yore agon,
Ne yet the folye of kyng Salamon,
And eek the grete strengthe of Ercules,
Thenchautements of Medea and Circes,
Ne of Turnus with the hardy fiers corage,
The riche Cresus, kaytyf in servage.

THAS may ye seen that Wysdom ne Richesse,
Beautee ne Sleighte, Strengthe, ne Hardy-
nesse,

Ne may with Venus holde champartye,
for as hir list the world than may she gye.
Lo, alle thise folk so caught were in hir las,
Til they for wo ful ofte seyde, *Alas!*
Suffiseth heere ensamples oon or two,
And though I koude rekene a thousand mo.

THE statue of Venus, glorious for to see,
Was naked, fletyng in the large see,
And fro the navel down al covered was
With waves grene, and bryghte as any glas.
A citole in hir right hand hadde she,
And on hir heed, ful semely for to see,
A rose gerland, fressh and wel smellyng,
Above hir heed hir dowves flikeryng.
Biforn hire stood hire sone Cupido,
Upon his shuldres wynges hadde he two,
And blynd he was, as it is often seene;
A bowe he bar and arwes bryghte and kene.



WYTH sholde I noght as wel eek telle
yow al
The portreiture that was upon the
wal
Withinne the temple of myghty
Mars the rede?

Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and brede,
Lyk to the estres of the grisly place
That highte the grete temple of Mars in Trace,
In thilke colde frosty regioun,
Ther as Mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.

IN which ther dwelleth neither man ne best,
With knotty, knarry, bareyne trees olde
Of stubbes sharpe and hidouse to biholde,
In which ther ran a rumbel and a swough,
As though a storm sholde bresten every bough;
And downward from an hille, under a bente,
Ther stood the temple of Mars armypotent,
Wrought al of burned steel, of which the tree
Was long and streit, and gastly for to see;
And therout cam a rage, and such a veze,
That it made all the gates for to rese.
The northren lyght in at the dores shoon,
for wyndowe on the wal ne was ther noon
Thurgh which men myghten any light discernen.

The dores were al of adamant eterne,
Yclenched overthwart and endelong
With iren tough; and for to make it strong,
Every pyler, the temple to sustene,
Was tonne greet, of iren bryght and shene.
Ther saugh I first the derke ymagynyng
Of felonye, and al the compassyng;
The cruel ire, reed as any gleede;
The pykepurs, and eek the pale drede;
The smylere with the knyfe under the cloke;
The shepne brennyng with the blake smoke;
The tresoun of the mordryng in the bedde;
The open werre, with woundes al bledde;
Contek, with bloody knyfe and sharpe manace;
Al ful of chirkyng was that sory place.

The sleere of hymself yet saugh I ther,
His herte blood hath bathed al his heer;
The nayl ydryven in the shode anyght;
The colde deeth, with mouth gapyng upright.
Amyddes of the temple sat Meschaunce,
With disconfort and sory contenance.

ET saugh I Woodnesse, laughyng in his
rage,

Armed compleint, outhees, & fiers outrage,
The careyne in the bush, with throte ycorve;
A thousand slayn, and not of qualm ystorve;
The tiraunt with the pray by force yraft;
The toun destroyed, ther was nothyng laft.
Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres;
The hunte strangled with the wilde beres;
The sowe freten the child right in the cradel;
The cook yscalded for al his longe ladel.

NOUGHT was foryeten by thin fortune of
Marte;

The cartere overryden with his carte,
Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.
Ther were also of Martes divisioun,
The barbour, and the bocher; and the smyth
That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his styth.
And al above, depeynted in a tour,
Saugh I Conquest sittynge in greet honour
With the sharpe swerde over his heed
hangynge by a soutil twynes threed.

DEPEYNTED was the slaughtre of Julius,
Of grete Nero, and of Antonius;

Al be that thilke tyme they were unborn,
Yet was hir deeth depeynted ther biforn
By manasyng of Mars, right by figure;
So was it shewed in that portreiture
As is depeynted in the sterres above,
Who shal be sleyn or elles deed for love.
Suffiseth oon ensample in stories olde,
I may nat rekene hem alle, though I wolde.

THE statue of Mars upon a carte stood,
Armed, and looked grym as he were wood;
And over his heed ther shynen two figures
Of sterres, that been cleped in scriptures,
That oon Puella, that oother Rubeus.
This god of armes was arrayed thus:
A wolf ther stood biforn hym at his feet
With eyen rede, and of a man he eet.
With soutil pencil was depeynt this storie,
In redoutyng of Mars and of his glorie.

NOW to the temple of Dyane the chaste
As shortly as I kan I wol me haste,
To telle yow al the descripcioun.
Depeynted been the walles up & doun
Of huntynge and of shamefast chas-
titee.

Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee,
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,
Was turned from a womman to a bere,
And after was she maad the loodesterre;
Thus was it peynt, I kan sey yow no ferre;
Hir sone is eek a sterre, as men may see.

Ther saugh I Dane, yturned til a tree,
I mene nat the goddesse Diane,
But Penneus doughter, which that highte Dane.
Ther saugh I Attheon an hert ymaked,
for vengeance that he saugh Diane al naked;
I saugh how that his houndes have hym caught,
And freeten hym, for that they knewe hym naught.

Yet peynted was a litel forthermoor
How Atthalante hunted the wilde boor,
And Meleagre, and many another mo,
for which Dyane wroghte hym care and wo.
Ther saugh I many another wonder storie,
The whiche me list nat drawn to memorie.

HIS goddesse on an hert ful hye seet,
With smale houndes al aboute hir feet,
And undermethe hir feet she hadde a
moone,

Wexynge it was, and sholde wanye soone.
In gaude grene hir statue clothed was,
With bowe in honde, and arwes in a cas.
Hir eyen caste she ful lowe adoun
Ther Pluto hath his derke regium.

A womman travailyng was hire biforn,
But, for hir child so longe was unborn,
ful pitously Lucyna gan she calle,
And seyde, help, for thou mayst best of alle.
Wel koude he peynten lifly, that it wroghte,
With many a floryn he the hewes boghte.

HAD been thise lystes maad, and
Theseus,
That at his grete cost arrayed thus
The temples & the theatre every deel,
Whan it was doon, hym lyked wonder
weel;

But stynte I wole of Theseus a lite,
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.
The day approcheth of hir retournynge,
That everich sholde an hundred knyghtes brynge,
The bataille to darreine, as I yow tolde,
And til Atthenes, hir covenants for to holde,
Hath everich of hem brought an hundred knyghtes
Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes.
And sikerly ther trowed many a man
That nevere sithen that the world bigan,
As for to speke of knyghthod of hir bond,
As fer as God hath makid see or lond,
Nas, of so fewe, so noble a compaignye,
for every wight that lovede chivalrye,
And wolde, his thanks, han a passant name,
Hath preyed that he myghte been of that game;
And wel was hym that therto chosen was;

for if ther fille tomorwe swich a caas,
Ye knowen wel, that every lusty knyght
That loveth paramours, and hath his myght,
Were it in Engeland, or elleswhere,
They wolde, hir thanks, wilnen to be there,
To fighte for a lady; benedicite!
It were a lusty sighte for to see.

AND right so ferden they with Palamon.
With hym ther wenten knyghtes many oon;
Som wol ben armed in an haubergeoun,
And in brestplate and in a light gypoun;
And somme woln have a paire plates large;
And somme woln have a pruce sheeld or a targe;
Somme woln ben armed on hir legges weel,
And have an ax, and somme a mace of steel;
Ther is no newe gyse, that it nas old.
Armed were they, as I have yow told
Everych after his opinioun.

THER maistow seen comynge with Palamon
Lygurge hymself, the grete kyng of Trace;
Blak was his berd, and manly was his face;
The cercles of his eyen in his heed,
They gloweden bitwyxe yellow and reed,
And lik a griffon looked he aboute,
With kempe heeris on his browes stoute;
His lymes grete, his brawnes harde and stronge,
His shuldres brode, his armes rounde and longe;

And, as the gyse was in his contree,
ful hye upon a chaar of gold stood he
With foure white boles in the trays.
Insteede of cote/armure over his harnays,
With nayles yelwe, and brighte as any gold,
He hadde a beres skyn, colblak, forold.
His longe heer was kembd bihynde his bak,
As any ravens fethere it shoon forblak.
A wrethe of gold, armgreet, of huge wighte,
Upon his heed, set ful of stones brighte,
Of fyne rubyes and of dyamaunts;
Aboute his chaar ther wenten white alaunts,
Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,
To huntun at the leoun or the deer;
And folwed hym with mosel faste ybounde,
Colored of gold and tourettes fyled rounde.
An hundred lordes hadde he in his route,
Armed ful wel, with hertes stierne and stoute.

ALTH Arcite in stories as men fynde
The grete Emetreus, the kyng of Inde,
Upon a steede bay, trapped in steel,
Covered in clooth of gold, dyapred weel,
Cam ridynge lyk the god of armes, Mars.
His cote/armure was of clooth of Cars
Couched with perles white and rounde and grete;
His sadel was of brennd gold, newe ybete;
A mantelet upon his shulder hangynge,
Bretful of rubyes rede, as fyr sparklynge;
His criske heer, lyk rynges was yronne,
And that was yellow, and glytered as the sonne.
His nose was heigh, his eyen bright citryn,
His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn,
A fewe frakenes in his face yspreynd,
Betwixen yellow and somdel blak ymeynd,
And as a leoun he his lookynge caste.
Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.

his berd was wel bigonne for to sprynge;
his voys was as a trompe thonderynge;
Upon his heed he wered, of laurer grene,
A gerland fressh and lusty for to sene.
Upon his hand he bar, for his deduyt,
An egle tame, as any lilye whyt.
An hundred lordes hadde he with hym
there,

Al armed, save hir heddes, in al hir gere,
ful richely in alle maner thynges;
for trusteth wel, that dukes, erles, kynges,
Were gadered in this noble compaignye,
for love, and for encrees of chivalrye.
Aboute this kyng ther ran on every part
ful many a tame leoun and lepart.

AND in this wise thise lordes, all and some,
Been on the Sonday to the citee come
Aboute pryme, and in the toun alight.

HIS Theseus, this duc, this worthy knyght,
Whan he had broght hem into his citee
And inned hem, everich in his degree,
He festeth hem, and dooth so greet labour
To esen hem, and doon hem al honour,
That yet men wength that on mannes wit
Of noon estat ne koude amenden it.

The mynstralcey, the service at the feeste,
The grete yiftes to the meeste and leeste,
The riche array of Theseus paleys,
Ne who sat first ne last upon the deys,
What ladyes fairest been, or best daunsynge,
Or which of hem kan dauncen beat and synge,
Ne who moost felyngly speketh of love;
What haukes sitten on the perche above,
What houndes ligen in the floor adoun;
Of al this make I now no mencion;
But al the effect; that thynketh me the beste;
Now cometh the point, and herkneth if yow leste.

THE Sonday nyght, er day bigan to sprynge,
Whan Palamon the larke herde synge,
Al though it nere nat day by houres two,
Yet song the larke, and Palamon also.
With hooly herte and with an heigh corage,
He roos, to wenden on his pilgrymage
Unto the blisful Citherea benigne,
I mene Venus, honorable and digne;
And in hir houre he walketh forth a paas
Unto the lystes, ther hire temple was,
And doun he kneleth with ful humble chere
And herte soor, and seyde in this manere:

MAIRESTE of faire, o lady
myn, Venus,
Doughter to Jove, and
spouse of Vulcanus,
Thow gladere of the mount
of Citheron,
for thilke love thow had-
dest to Adoon,
Have pitee of my bittre
teeris smerte,
And taak myn humble preyere at thyn herte.
Alas! I ne have no langage to telle
Theeffectes ne the torments of myn helle;
Myn herte may myne harmes nat biwreie;

I am so confus, that I kan noght seye.
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest wele
My thought, and seest what harmes that I feele,
Considere al this, and rewe upon my soore,
As wisly as I shal for everemoore,
Emforth my myght, thy trewe servant be,
And holden werre alwey with chastitee,
That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe,
I kepe noght of armes for to yelp,
Ne I ne axe nat tomorwe to have victorie,
Ne renoun in this cas, ne veyne glorie
Of pris of armes blowen up and doun,
But I wolde have fully possessioun
Of Emelye, and dye in thy servyse;
fynd thow the manere how, and in what wyse.

I recche nat but it may bettre be
To have victorie of hem, or they of me,
So that I have my lady in myne armes;
for though so be that Mars is god of armes,
Youre vertu is so greet in hevne above,
That if yow list, I shal wel have my love.
Thy temple wol I worshipe everemo,
And on thyn auter, wher I ride or go,
I wol doon sacrifice and fires beete;
And if ye wol nat so, my lady sweete,
Thanne preye I thee, tomorwe with a spere
That Arcite me thurgh the herte bere;
Thanne rekke I noght whan I have lost my lyf
Though that Arcite wyne hire to his wyf:
This is the effect and ende of my preyere,
Yif me my love, thow blisful lady deere.

AN thurison was doon of Palamon,
His sacrifice he dide, and that anon
ful pitously, with alle circumstaunce,
Al telle I noght as now his observaunce;
But atte laste the statue of Venus shook
And made a signe, wherby that he took
That his preyere accepted was that day;
for thogh the signe shewed a delay,
Yet wiste he wel that graunted was his boone,
And with glad herte he wente hym hoom ful
soone.

THE thriddre houre inequal that Palamon
Bigan to Venus temple for to gon,
Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,
And to the temple of Dyane gan hye.
Hir maydens that she thider with hire ladde
ful redily with hem the fyr they hadde,
Thencens, the clothes, and the remenant al
That to the sacrifice longen shal;
The hornes fulle of meeth, as was the gyse;
Ther lakked noght to doon hir sacrificse.
Smokynge the temple, ful of clothes faire,
This Emelye, with herte debonaire,
Hir body wessh with water of a welle;
But how she dide her ryte, I dar nat telle,
But it be any thing in general,
And yet it were a game to heeren al;
To hym that meneth wel it were no charge,
But it is good a man been at his large.

HR brighte heer was kempd, untressed al,
A coroune of a grene ook cerial
Upon hir heed was set ful fair and meete.



Two fyres on the auter gan she beete,
And dide hir thynges, as men may biholde
In Stace of Thebes, and thise bookes olde.
Whan kyndled was the fyr, with pitous cheere,
Unto Dyane she spak, as ye may heere.

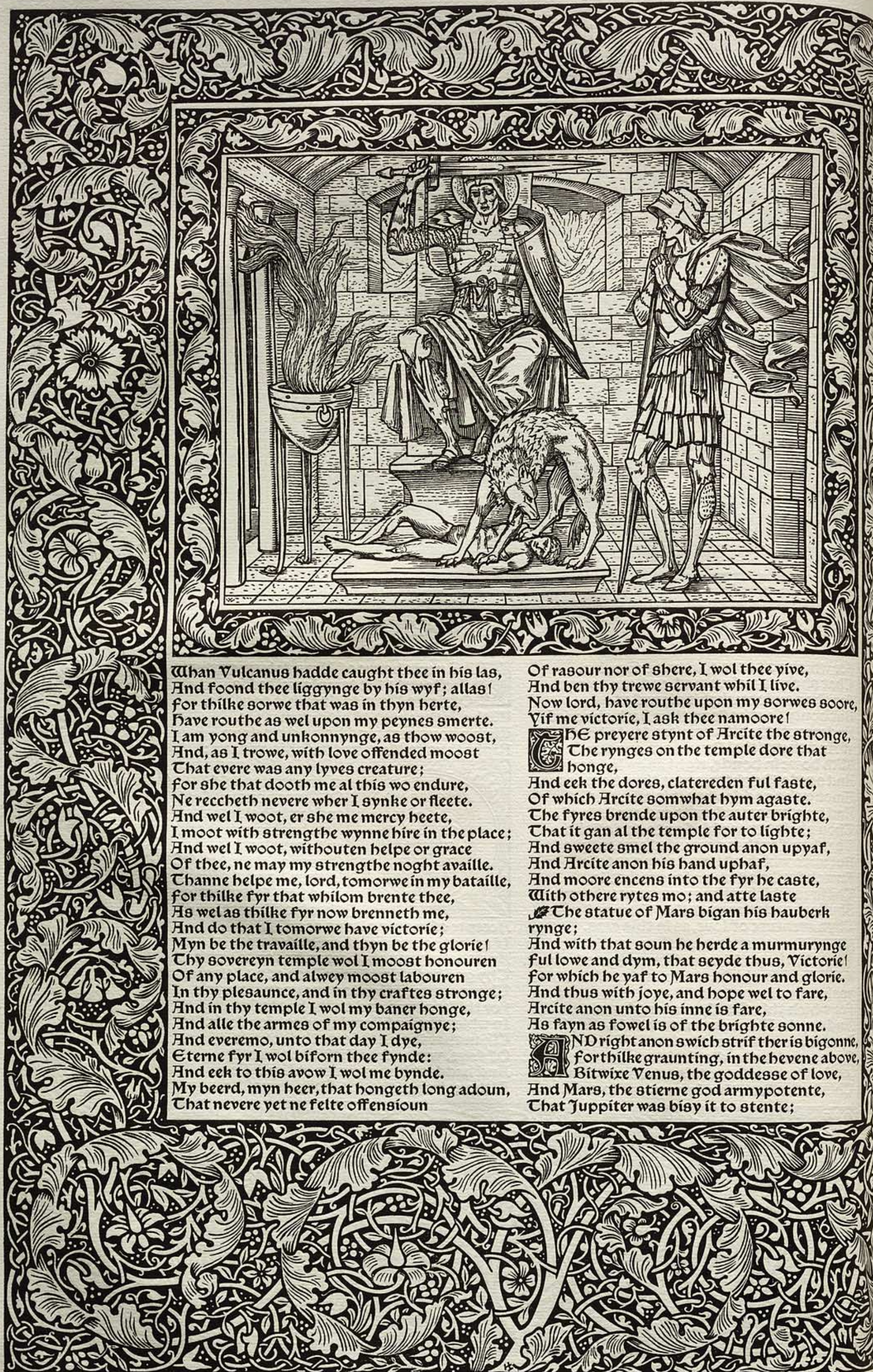
CHASTE goddesse of the wodes grene,
To whom bothe hevене and erthe & see is sene,
Queene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,
Goddess of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe
ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire,
As keepe me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire,
That Atttheon aboute cruelly.
Chaste goddesse, wel wostow that I
Desire to ben a mayden al my tyf,
Ne nevere wol I be no love, ne wyf.
I am, thow woost, yet of thy compaignye
I mayde, and love huntynge and venerye,
And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
And noght to ben a wyf and be with childe;
Noght wol I knowe the compaignye of man.
Now helpe me, lady, sith ye may and kan,
for tho thre formes that thou hast in thee.

And Palamon, that hast swich love to me,
And eek Arcite, that loveth me so soore,
This grace I preye thee withoute moore,
As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two,
And fro me turne away hir hertes so,
That al hire hoot love and hir desir,
And al hir bisy torment and hir fir,
Be queynt, or turned in another place.
And if so be thou wolt do me no grace,
Or if my destynce be shapen so
That I shal nedes have oon of hem two,
As sende me hym that moost desirith me.
Bihold, goddesse of elene chastitee,
The bittre teeres that on my chekes falle.
Syn thou art mayde, and kepere of us alle,
My maydenhede thou kepe and wel conserve,
And whil I lyve a mayde, I wol thee serve.
THE fires brenne upon the auter cleere
Whil Emelye was thus in hir preyere;
But sodeynly she saugh a sighte
queynte,
for right anon, oon of the fyres queynte
And quyked agayn, and after that, anon
That oother fyr was queynt, and al agon,
And as it queynte it made a whistelynge,
As doon thise wete brondes in hir brennyng,
And at the brondes ende out ran anon
As it were bloody dropes many oon;



for which so soore agast was Emelye,
That she was wel ny mad, and gan to crye,
for she ne wiste what it signified;
But oonly for the feere thus hath she cried,
And wepe, that it was pitee for to heere.
And therewithal Dyane gan appeere,
With bowe in honde, right as an huntresse,
And seyde, Doghter, stynt thyn hevynesse.
Among the goddes hye it is affermed,
And by eterne word writt and confermed,
Thou shalt ben wedded unto oon of tho
That han for thee so muchel care and wo;
But unto which of hem I may nat telle.
farwel, for I ne may no lenger dwelle.
The fires whiche that on myn auter brenne
Shulle thee declaren, er that thou go henne,
Thyn aventure of love, as in this caas.
AND with that word the arwes in the caas
Of the goddesse clateren faste & ryng,
And forth she wente, and made a van-
yschyng;
for which this Emelye astoned was,
And seyde, What amounteth this, alas!
I putte me in thy proteccioun,
Dyane, and in thy disposicioun.
And hoom she goth anon the nexte weye.
This is theeffect, ther is namore to seye.

THE nexte houre of Mars folwyng this,
Arcite unto the temple walked is
Of fierse Mars, to doon his sacrificise,
With alle the rytes of his payen wyse.
With pitous herte and heigh devocioun,
Right thus to Mars he seyde his orisoun:
STRONGE god, that in the regnes colde
Of Trace honoured art and lord yholde,
And hast in every regne
and every lond
Of armes al the brydel
in thyn hond,
And hem fortunest as
thee lyst devyse,
Accepte of me my pitous sacrificise.
If so be that my youthe may deserve,
And that my myght be worthy for to serve
Thy godhede, that I may been oon of thyne,
Thanne preye I thee to rewe upon my pyne,
for thilke peyne, and thilke hoot fir,
In which thou whilom brendest for desir,
Whan that thou usedeste the beautee
Of faire, yonge, fresshe Venus free,
And haddest hire in armes at thy wille,
Although thee ones on a tyme mysfille,



Whan Vulcanus hadde caught thee in his las,
And foond thee liggyng by his wyf; alas!
for thilke sorwe that was in thyn herte,
Have routhe as wel upon my peynes smerte.
I am yong and unkonnyng, as thou woost,
And, as I trowe, with love offended moost
That ever was any lyes creature;
for she that dooth me al this wo endure,
Ne reccheth nevere wher I synke or fleete.
And wel I woot, er she me mercy heete,
I moot with strengthe wyne hire in the place;
And wel I woot, withouten helpe or grace
Of thee, ne may my strengthe noght availle.
Thanne helpe me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille,
for thilke fyr that whilom brente thee,
As wel as thilke fyr now brenneth me,
And do that I to-morwe have victorie;
Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the glorie!
Thy sovereyn temple wol I moost honouren
Of any place, and alwey moost labouren
In thy plesaunce, and in thy craftes stronge;
And in thy temple I wol my baner honge,
And alle the armes of my compaignye;
And everemo, unto that day I dye,
Eterne fyr I wol biforn thee fynde:
And eek to this avow I wol me bynde.
My beerd, myn heer, that hongeth long adoun,
That nevere yet ne felte offensoun

Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,
And ben thy trewe servant whil I live.
Now lord, have routhe upon my sorwes soore,
Yif me victorie, I ask thee namoore!

THE preyere stynt of Arcite the stronge,
The rynges on the temple dore that
honge,

And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste,
Of which Arcite somewhat hym agaste.
The fyres brende upon the auter bryghte,
That it gan al the temple for to lighte;
And sweete smel the ground anon upyaf,
And Arcite anon his hand uphaf,
And moore encens into the fyr he caste,
With othere rytes mo; and atte laste
The statue of Mars bigan his hauberik
rynge;

And with that soun he herde a murmuringe
ful lowe and dym, that seyde thus, Victorie!
for which he yaf to Mars honour and glorie.
And thus with joye, and hope wel to fare,
Arcite anon unto his inne is fare,
As fayn as fowel is of the bryghte sonne.

AND right anon swich strif ther is bigonne,
for thilke graunting, in the hevene above,
Bitwixe Venus, the goddessse of love,
And Mars, the stierne god armypotent,
That Juppiter was bisy it to stente;

Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,
That knew so manye of adventures olde,
foond in his olde experience an art,
That he ful soone hath plesed every part.
As sooth is seyde, elde hath greet advantage;
In elde is bothe wysdom and usage;
Men may the olde atrenne, and noght atrede.
Saturne anon, to stynten strif and drede,
Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,
Of al this strif he gan remedie fynde.

MY deere doghter Venus, quod Saturne,
My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,
Hath moore power than woot any man.

Myn is the drenchyng in the see so wan;
Myn is the prison in the derke cote;
Myn is the stranglyng and hangyng by the throte;
The murmure, and the cherles rebellunge,
The groynyng, and the pryvee empoysonyng;
I do vengeance and pleyn correccioun
While I dwelle in the signe of the leoun.
Myn is the ruyme of the hye halles,
The fallynge of the toures and of the walles
Upon the mynour or the carpenter.
I slow Sampson in shakynge the piler;
And myne be the maladyes colde,
The derke tresons, and the castes olde;
My lookyng is the fader of pestilence.

Now wepe namoore, I shal doon diligence
That Palamon, that is thyn owene knyght,
Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight.
Though Mars shal helpe his knyght, yet nathelees
Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tyme pees,
Al be ye noght of o compleccioun,
That causeth al day swich divisoun.
I am thyn aiel, redy at thy wille;
Weep now namoore, I wol thy lust fulfille.

NOW wol I stynten of the goddess above,
Of Mars, and of Venus, goddessse of love,
And telle yow, as pleyntly as I kan,
The grete effect, for which that I bygan.

Explicit tercia pars. Sequitur pars quarta.

REEF was the feeste in At-
thenes that day,
And eek the lusty seson of
that May
Made every wight to been in
such plesaunce,
That al that Monday justen
they and daunce,
And spenden it in Venus
heigh servyse;

But, by the cause that they sholde ryse
Early, for to seen the grete fight,
Unto hir reste wenten they at nyght.
And on the morwe, whan that day gan spryng,
Of hors and harneys, noyse and clatering
Ther was in hostelryes al aboute,
And to the paleys rood ther many a route
Of lordes, upon steedes and palfreys.

Ther maystow seen devisyng of harneys
So unkouth and so riche, and wrought so weel
Of goldsmythrye, of browdryng, and of steel;
The sheeldes bryght, testeres, and trappures;

Gold/hewen helmes, hauberkes, cote/armures;
Lordes in paraments on hir courseres,
Knyghtes of retenue, and eek squieres
Nailyng the speres, and helmes bokelyng,
Giggyng of sheeldes, with layneres lacyng;
Ther as nede is, they weren nothyng ydel;
The fomy steedes on the golden brydel
Gnawynge, and faste the armurers also
With fyle and hamer, prikyng to and fro;
Yemen on foote, and communes many oon,
With shorte staves, thikke as they may goon;
Pypes, trompes, nakers, and clariounes,
That in the bataille blowen bloody sounes.

The paleys ful of peples up and doun,
Heere thre, ther ten, holdyng hir questiou,
Dyvynyng of thise Thebane knyghtes two.
Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so;
Somme helden with hym with the blake berd,
Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke
herd;

Somme seyde he looked grymme and he wolde
fichte,

He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte.

Thus was the halle ful of divynyng

Longe after that the sonne gan to spryng.

THE grete Theseus, that of his sleepe awaked,
With mynstralcie & noyse that was maked,

Heeld yet the chambre of his paleys riche,

Til that the Thebane knyghtes, bothe yliche

Honoured, were into the paleys fet.

Duc Theseus was at a wyndow set,

Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.

The peple preeseth thiderward ful soone

Hym for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,

And eek to herkne his heste and his sentence.

An heraud on a scaffold made an hoo!

Til al the noyse of peple was ydo;

And whan he saugh the noyse of peple al stille,

Tho shewed he the myghty dukes wille.

THE lord hath of his heigh discreccioun

Considered, that it were destruccioun

To gentil blood, to figheten in the gyse

Of mortal bataille now in this emprise;

Wherfore, to shapen that they shal nat dye,

He wolde his firste purpos modifye.

No man therfore, up peyne of los of lyf,

No maner shot, ne polax, ne short knyf

Into the lystes sende, ne thider bryng;

Ne short swerd, for to stoke with poynt bityng,

No man ne drawe, ne bere by his syde.

Ne no man shal unto his felawe ryde

But o cours, with a sharpe ygrounde spere;

foyne, if hym list, on foote, hymself to were.

And he that is at meschief, shal be take,

And noght slayn, but be brought unto the stake

That shal ben ordeyned on either syde,

But thider he shal by force, and there abyde.

And if so falle, the chieftayn be take

On outhur syde, or elles sleen his make,

No lenger shal the turneyng laste.

God spede you! gooth forth, and ley on faste!

With long swerd & with mace fighteth youre fille.

Gooth now youre wey; this is the lordes wille.

The
Knyghtes
Tale

THE voys of peple touchede the hevene,
So loude cride they, with murie stevene,
God save swich a lord, that is so good,
He wilneth no destruccoun of blood!
Upon the trompes and the melodye
And to the lystes rit the compaignye
By ordinance, thurghout the citee large,
Hanged with clooth of gold, and nat with sarge.
Ful lik a lord this noble duc gan ryde,
Thise two Thebanes upon either side;
And after rood the queene and Emelye,
And after that another compaignye
Of oon and oother after hir degre.
And thus they passen thurghout the citee,
And to the lystes come they by tyme.
It nas not of the day yet fully pryde
Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,
Ypolita the queene and Emelye,
And othere ladyes in degrees aboute.
Unto the seetes presseth al the route;
And westward, thurgh the gates under Marte,
Arcite, and eek the hondred of his parte,
With baner reed, is entred right anon.
And in that selve moment Palamon
Is under Venus, estward in the place,
With baner whyt, and hardy chiere and face.
IN al the world, to seken up and doun,
So evne withouten variacioun,
Ther nere swiche compaignyes tweye;
for ther was noon so wys that koude seye
That any hadde of oother avauntage
Of worthynesse, ne of estat, ne age,
So evne were they chosen, for to gesse,
And in two ringes faire they hem dresse.
Whan that hir names rad were everichoon,
That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon.
Tho were the gates shet, and cried was loude,
Do now youre devoir, yonge knyghtes proude!
The heraudes lefte hir prikyng up and doun;
Now ryngen trompes loude and clarioun;
Ther is namoure to seyn, but west and est,
In goon the speres ful sadly in arrest;
In gooth the sharpe spore into the syde.
Ther seen men who kan juste, and who kan ryde;
Ther shyveren shaftes upon sheeldes thikke;
He feeleth thurgh the herte/spoon the prikke.
Up spryngen speres twenty foot on highte;
Out gooth the swerdes as the silver brighte;
The helmes they tohewen and toshrede;
Out brest the blood, with stierne streemes rede;
With myghty maces the bones they tobreste.
He, thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste,
Ther, stomblen steedes stronge, and doun
gooth al;
He, rolleth under foot as dooth a bal;
He, foynech on his feet with his tronchoun,
And he, hym hurtleth with his hors adoun;
He, thurgh the body is hurte, and sithen take,
Maugree his heed, and broght unto the stake,
As forward was, right ther he moste abyde;
Another lad is on that oother syde.
And som tyme dooth hem Theseus to reste,
Hem to refresshe and drynken, if hem leste.

ful ofte a day han thise Thebanes two,
Togydre ymet and wrought his felawe wo;
Unhorsed hath ech oother of hem tweye.
Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgopheye,
Whan that hir whelp is stole whan it is life,
So cruel on the hunte, as is Arcite
for jelous herte upon this Palamon;
Ne in Belmarye ther nys so fel leoun
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,
As Palamon to sleen his foo Arcite.
The jelous strokes on hir helmes byte;
Out renneth blood on bothe hir sydes rede.
SOM tyme an ende ther is of every dede,
for er the sonne unto the reste wente,
The stronge kyng Emetreus gan hente
This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,
And made his swerd depe in his flessch to byte;
And by the force of twenty is he take
Unyolden, and ydrawe unto the stake.
And in the rescous of this Palamon,
The stronge kyng Lygurge is born adoun;
And kyng Emetreus, for al his strengthe,
Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe;
So hitte him Palamon er he were take;
But al for noght, he was broght to the stake.
His hardy herte myghte hym helpe naught,
He moste abyde, whan that he was caught,
By force, and eek by composicioun.
WHO sorweth now but woful Palamon,
That moot namoure goon agayn to fighte?
And whan that Theseus hadde seyn this
sighte,
Unto the folk that foghten thus echon
He cryde, hoo! namoure, for it is don!
I wol be trewe juge, and no partie;
Arcite of Thebes shall have Emelye.
That by his fortune bath hire faire ywonne.
NON ther is a noyse of peple bigonne,
for joye of this, so loude & heighe withalle,
It semed that the lystes sholde falle.
WHAT kan now faire Venus doon above?
What seith she now? what dooth this
queene of love?
But wepeth so, for wantyng of hir wille,
Til that hir teeres in the lystes fille;
She seyde, I am ashamed doutelees.
Saturnus seyde, Doghter, hoold thy pees;
Mars hath his wille, his knyght hath all his boone,
And, by myn heed, thou shalt been esed soone.
THE trompes, with the loude mynstralcie,
The heraudes, that ful loude yolle and crie,
Been in hire wele for joye of daun Arcite.
But herknech me, and stynteth now a lite,
Which a myracle ther bifel anon.
THIS fierse Arcite hath of his helm ydon,
And on a courser, for to shewe his face,
He priketh endelong the large place,
Lokyng upward upon this Emelye;
And she agayn hym caste a freendliche eye,
for wommen, as to speken in comune,
Thei folwen al the favour of fortune,
And was al his, in chiere, as in his herte.

Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,
from Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne,
for which his hors for fere gan to turne,
And leepe aside, and foundred as he leepe,
And er that Arcite may taken keepe,
He pighte hym on the pomel of his heed,
That in the place he lay as he were deed,
His brest tobrosen with his sadelbowe.
As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,
So was the blood yronnen in his face.
Anon he was yborn out of the place
With herte soor, to Theseus paleys.
Tho was he korven out of his harneys,
And in a bed ybrought ful faire and blyve,
for he was yet in memorie and alyve,
And alwey cryng after Emelye.
UC Theseus with al his compaignye
Is comen boon to Atthenes his citee,
With alle blisse and greet solemnitee;
Al be it that this aventure was falle,
He nolde noght disconforten hem alle.
Men seyden eek, that Arcite shal nat dye,
He shal been heeled of his maladye.
And of another thyng they were as fayn,
That of hem alle was ther noon yslayn,
Al were they soore yhurt, and namely oon,
That with a spere was thirled his brest boon.
To othere woundes, and to broken armes,
Somme hadden salves, & somme hadden charmes,
fermacies of herbes, and eek save
They dronken, for they wolde hir lymes have.
for which this noble duc, as he wel kan,
Conforteth and honoureth every man,
And made revel al the longe nyght,
Unto the strange lordes, as was right.
Ne ther was holden no disconfortyng,
But as a justes or a tourneyng;
for goothly ther was no disconfort,
for fallyng nys nat but an aventure;
Ne to be lad by force unto the stake
Unyolden, and with twenty knyghtes take,
O persone allone, withouten mo,
And haryed forth by arme, foot and too,
And eek his steede dryven forth with staves,
With footmen, bothe yemen and eek knaves,
It nas aretted hym no vileyny,
Ther may no man clepen it cowardye.
WHICH anon duc Theseus leet crye,
To stynten alle rancour and envye,
The gree as wel of o syde as of oother,
And eyther syde ylik as ootheres brother;
And yaf hem yiftes after hir degree,
And fully heeld a feeste dayes three,
And convoyed the kynges worthily
Out of his toun, a journee largely,
And boon wente every man the righte way.
Ther was namoure, but fare wel! Have good day!
Of this bataille I wol namoure endite,
But speke of Palamon and of Arcyte.
WELLET the brest of Arcite, & the soore
Encresseth at his herte moore and moore.
The clothered blood, for any lechecraft,
Corrupteth, and is in his bouk ylast,

That neither veyne/blood ne ventusyng,
Ne drynke of herbes may ben his helpyng;
The vertu expulsif, or animal,
fro thilke vertu cleped natural,
Ne may the venym voyden ne expelle.
The pipes of his longes gonne to swelle,
And every lacerte in his brest adoun
Is shent with venym and corrupcioun.
Hym gayneth neither, for to gete his lif,
Vomyt upward, ne downward laxatif;
Al is tobrosen thilke region,
Nature hath now no dominacioun.
And certainly, ther nature wol nat wirche,
farewel phisik, go ber the man to chirche.
This al and som, that Arcite moot dye,
for which he sendeth after Emelye,
And Palamon, that was his cosyn deere,
Thanne seyde he thus, as ye shal after heere.
WHICH may the woful spirit in myn herte
Declare o point of alle my sorwes smerte
To yow, my lady, that I love moost;
But I biquethe the servyce of my goost
To yow aboven every creature,
Syn that my lyf it may no lenger dure.
Alas, the wol! alas, the peynes stronge,
That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!
Alas, the deeth! alas, myn Emelye!
Alas, departyng of our compaignye!
Alas, myn hertes queene! alas, my wyf!
Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!
What is this world? what asketh men to have?
Now with his love, now in his colde grave
Allone, withouten any compaignye.
farewel, my swete foo! myn Emelye!
And softe taak me in youre armes tweye,
for love of God, and herkneth what I seye.
HAVE heer with my cosyn Palamon
Had strif and rancour, many a day agon
for love of yow, and for my jalouseye.
And Juppiter so wys my soule gye,
To speken of a servaunt proprely,
With alle circumstaunces trewely,
That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and knyghthede,
Wysdom, humblesse, estat and heigh kynrede,
freedom, and al that longeth to that art,
So Juppiter have of my soule part,
As in this world right now ne knowe I non
So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,
That serveth yow, and wol doon al his lyf.
And if that ever ye shul ben a wyf,
for yet nat Palamon, the gentil man.
And with that word his speche faille gan,
And from his feete up to his brest was come
The coold of deeth, that hadde hym overcome,
And yet mooreover, in his armes two
The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.
Oonly the intellect, withouten moore,
That dwelled in his herte syh and soore,
Gan failen when the herte felte deeth,
Dusked his eyen two, and failed breeth.
But on his lady yet caste he his eye;
His laste word was, Mercy, Emelye!
His spirit chaunged hous, and wente ther,

As I cam nevere, I kan nat tellen wher.
Therfore I stynte, I nam no divinistre;
Of soules fynde I nat in this registre,
Ne me ne list thilke opinions to telle.
Of hem, though that they writen wher they dwelle.
Arcite is coold, ther Mars his soule gye;
Now wol I speken forth of Emelye.

BRIGHTE Emelye, and howleth Palamon,
And Theseus his suster took anon
Swownyng, & baar hire fro the corps away.
What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,
To tellen how she weepeth, both eve and morwe?
for in swich cas wommen can have swich sorwe,
Whan that hir housbond ben from hem ago,
That for the moore riche in his degree,
Or ellis fallen in swich maladye,
That at the laste certainly they dye.

Infinite been the sorwes and the teeres
Of olde folk, and eek of tendre yeres,
In all the toun for deeth of this Theban;
for hym ther wepeth bothe child and man;
So greet a wepyng was ther noon certayn,
Whan Ector was ybrought al fressh yslayn
To Troye: Alas! the pitee that was ther,
Crachyng of chekes, rentyng eek of heer.

Why woldestow be deed? these women crye,
And haddest gold ynough, and Emelye?
No man ne myghte gladen Theseus,
Savyng his olde fader Egeus,
That knew this worldes transmutacioun,
As he hadde seyn it chaungen, up and doun,
Joye after wo, and wo after gladnesse;
And shewed hem ensamples and liknesse.

Right as ther dyed nevere man, quod he,
That he ne lyvede in erthe in som degree,
Right so ther lyvede nevere man, he seyde,
In al this world, that some tyme he ne deyde.
This world nys but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we been pilgrymes, passyng to and fro;
Deeth is an ende of every worldly soore.

And over al this yet seyde he muchel moore
To this effect, ful wisely to enhorde
The peple, that they sholde hem reconforte.

DUC Theseus, with all his bisy cure,
Cast busyly wher that the sepulture
Of goode Arcite may best ymaked be,
And eek moost honorable in his degree.
And at the laste he took conclusioun,
That ther as first Arcite and Palamon
hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,
That in that selve grove, swoote and grene,
Ther as he hadde his amoureuse desires,
His compleynte, and for love his hooted fires,
He wolde make a fyr in which thoffice
Of funeral he myghte al accomplice;
And leet comande anon to bakke and hewe
The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe
In colpons, wel arrayed for to brenne.
His officers with swifte feet they renne,
And ryde anon at his comandement.

And after this, Theseus hath ysent
After a beere, and it al overspradde
With clooth of gold, the richeste that he hadde;

And of the same suyte he cladde Arcite.
Upon his hondes hadde he gloves white,
Eek on his heed a croune of laurer grene,
And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.
He leyde hym, bare the visage, on the beere.
Therwith he weep that pitee was to heere;
And, for the peple sholde seen hym alle,
Whan it was day, he broghte hym to the halle,
That roreth of the crying and the soun.

HO cam this woful Theban Palamon,
With flotery berd, and rugged ashy heeres;
In clothes blake, ydropped al with teeres;
And passyng othere of wepyng, Emelye,
The rewefulleste of al the compaignye.

In as muche as the servyse sholde be
The moore noble and riche in his degree,
Duc Theseus leet forth thre steedes bryng,
That trapped were in steel al gliteryng,
And covered with the armes of daun Arcite.
Upon these steedes, that weren grete and white,
Ther sitten folk, of whiche oon baar his sheeld,
Another his spere up in his hondes heeld;
The thridde baar with hym his bowe Turkeys,
Of brend gold was the caas, and eek the harneys,
And riden forth a paas with sorweful cheere
Toward the grove, as ye shul after heere.

THE nobleste of the Grekes that ther were,
Upon hir shuldres caryeden the beere,
With slake paas, and eyen rede and wete,
Thurghout the citee, by the maister strete,
That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hye
Right of the same is al the strete ywrye.

UPON the right hond wente olde Egeus,
And on that oother syde duc Theseus,
With vessels in hir hond of gold ful fyn
Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn;
Eek Palamon with ful greet compaignye,
And after that cam woful Emelye,
With fyr in bonde, as was that tyme the gyse,
To do thoffice of funeral servyse.

NEIGH labour, and ful greet apparail
lyng,
Was at the service and the fyr mak-
yng,
That with his grene top the heven
raughte,

And twenty fadme of brede the armes straughte,
This is to seyn, the bowes were so brode.
Of stree first ther was leyed ful many a lode;
But how the fyr was makid up on highte,
And eek the names that the trees highte,
As ook, firre, birch, aspe, alder, holm, popeler,
Wylugh, elm, plane, assh, box, chasteyn, lynde,
laurer,
Mapul, thorn, bech, hasel, ew, whippeltre,
How they weren feld, shal nat be toold for me;
Ne how the goddes ronnen up and doun,
Disherited of hire habitacioun,
In whiche they woneden in reste and pees,
Nymphus, and fawnes, and amadrades;
Ne how the beestes and the briddes alle
fledde for fere, whan the wode was falle;
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,

That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright;
Ne how the fyr was couched first with stree,
And thanne with drye stokkes, cloven a thre,
And thanne with grene wode and spicerye,
And thanne with clooth of gold, and with perrye,
And gerlandes, hangyng with ful many a flour,
The mirre, thencens, with al so greet odour;
Ne how Arcite lay among al this,
Ne what richesse aboute his body is;
Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,
Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse;
Ne how she swowned whan men made fyr,
Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desyr,
Ne what jeweles men in the fyre caste,
Whan that the fyr was greet and brente faste;
Ne howsomme caste hir sheeld, & somme hir spere,
And of hire vestiments, whiche that they were,
And coppes ful of wyn, and milk, and blood,
Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood;
Ne how the Grekes, with an huge route,
Thryes they riden al the fyr aboute
Upon the left hand, with a loud shoutyng,
And thryes with hir speres clateryng,
And thryes how the ladyes gonne crye;
And how that lad was homward Emelye;
Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde;
Ne how that lychewake was yholde
Al thilke nyght; ne how the Grekes pleye
The wakepleyes; ne kepe I nat to seye
Who wastleth best naked, with oille enoynt,
Ne who that baar hym best, in no disjoyn.
I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon
hoom til Atthenes whan the pley is doon;
But shortly to the point thanne wol I wende,
And maken of my longe tale an ende.

By processe and by lengthe of certeyn yeres,
Of Grekes, by oon general assent
Thanne semed me ther was a parlement
At Atthenes, upon certain poynts and caas;
Among the whiche poynts yspoken was,
To have with certein contrees alliaunce,
And have fully of Thebens obeissaunce,
for which this noble Theseus anon
leet senden after gentil Palamon,
Unwist of hym what was the cause and why;
But in his blake clothes sorwefully
He cam at his comandement in hye.
Tho sente Theseus for Emelye.
Whan they were set, and hust was al the place,
And Theseus abiden hadde a space
Er any word cam fram his wise brest,
His eyen sette he ther as was his lest,
And with a sad visage he siked stille,
And after that right thus he seyde his wille.

THE firste moevere of the cause above,
Whan he first made the faire cheyne of love,
Greet was the effect, & heigh was his entente;
Wel wiste he why, and what therof he mente;
for with that faire cheyne of love he bond
The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond,
In certeyn boundes that they may nat flee.
That same prince, and that moevere, quod he,
hath stablissed, in this wrecched world adoun,

Certeyn dayes and duracioun
To al that is engendred in this place,
Over the whiche day they may nat pace,
Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge;
Ther nedeth noon auctoritee allegge,
for it is preeved by experience,
But that me list declaren my sentence.
Thanne may men by this ordre wel discerne,
That thilke moevere stable is and eterne.
Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool,
That every part dirryveth from his hool.
for nature hath nat take his bigynnyng
Of no partie ne cantel of a thyng,
But of a thyng that parfit is and stable,
Descendyng so, til it be corruptable.
And therfore of his wise purveiaunce,
He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,
That spesces of thynges and progressiouns
Shullen enduren by successiouns,
And nat eterne, withouten any lye;
This maystow understonde, and seen at eye.

Loo the ook, that hath so long a norissyng
from tyme that it first bigynneth spryng,
And hath so long a lif, as we may see,
Yet at the laste wasted is the tree.
Considereth eek how that the harde stoon
Under oure feet, on which we trede and goon,
Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye;
The brode ryver somtyme wexeth dreye;
The grete toures se we wane and wende;
Thanne may ye se that al this thyng hath ende.
Of man and womman seen we wel also,
That nedeth in oon of these termes two,
This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age,
He moot be deed, the kyng as shal a page;
Som in his bed, som in the depe see,
Som in the large feeld, as men may se;
Ther helpeth noght, al goth that ilke weye:
Thanne may I seyn that al this thyng moot deye.
What maketh this but Juppiter, the kyng?
The which is prince, and cause of alle thyng,
Convertyng al unto his propre welle,
from which it is dirryved, sooth to telle.
And hereagayns no creature on lyve,
Of no degree, availleth for to stryve.
Thanne is it wysdom, as it thynketh me,
To maken vertu of necessitee,
And take it weel that we may not eschue,
And namely that, that to us alle is due.
And whoso gruccheth ought, he dooth folye,
And rebel is to hym that al may gye;
And certainly a man hath moost honour,
To dyen in his excellence and flour,
Whan he is siker of his goode name.
Thanne hath he doon his freend ne hym no shame,
And gladder oghte his freend been of his deeth,
Whan with honour upyolden is his breeth,
Than whan his name apalled is for age,
for al forgotten is his vassellage.
Thanne is it best, as for a worthy fame,
To dyen whan that he is best of name.

THE contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse.
Why grucchen we, why have we hevynesse
That good Arcite, of chivalrye the flour,



Departed is with duetee and honour
Out of this foule prisoun of this tyf?
Why gruechen heere his cosyn and his wyf
Of his welfare that loved hem so weel?
Kan he hem thank? Nay, God woot, never a deel,
That bothe his soule & eek hemself offende,
And yet they mowe hir lustes nat amende.

WHAT may I conclude of this
longe serye,
But after wo, I rede us to be
merye,
And thanken Juppiter of al his
grace?

And er that we departen from this place,
I rede that we make of sorwes two,
O parfit joye, lastyng everemo.
And looketh now, wher moost sorwe is
herinne,
Ther wol we first amenden and bigynne.
Suster, quod he, this is my fulle assent,
With all thavyss heere of my parlement,
That gentil Palamon, thyn owene knyght,
That serveth yow with wille, herte, and myght,
And evere hath doon, syn that ye first hym
knewe,
That ye shul, of your grace, upon hym rewe,
And taken hym for housbonde and for lord;
Lene me youre hond, for this is oure accord.

Lat se now of youre wommanly pitee;
He is a kynges brother sone, pardee,
And though he were a povre bachelor,
Syn he hath served yow so many a yeer
And had for yow so greet adversitee,
It mooste been considered, leeveth me,
for gentil mercy oghte to passen right.

GANNES seyde he thus to Palamon ful
right:

I trowe ther nedeth litel sermonyng
To make yow assente to this thyng;
Com neer, and taak youre lady by the hond.
Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond
That highte matrimoine, or mariage,
By al the conseil and the baronage.
And thus with alle blisse and melodye
Hath Palamon wywedded Emelye;
And God, that al this wyde world hath wroght,
Sende hym his love, that it deere aboght,
for now is Palamon in alle wele,
Lyyng in blisse, in richesse, and in heele;
And Emelye hym loveth so tendrely,
And he hire serveth al so gentilly,
That nevere was ther no word hem bitwene
Of jalousie, or any oother tene.

Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye,
And God save al this faire compaignye.

Heere is ended the Knyghtes Tale.

**Heere folwen the wordes bitwene the Hoost
and the Millere.**

WHAN that the Knyght had thus
his tale ytold,
In al the routene was ther yong
ne oold
That he ne seyde it was a noble
storie,

And worthy for to drawn to memorie,
And namely the gentils everichon.
Oure Hooste lough & swoor. Somoot I gon,
This gooth a right; unboked is the male;
Lat se now who shal telle another tale,
for trewely the game is wel bigonne.
Now telleth on, sire Monk, if that ye konne
Sumwhat to quite with the Knyghtes tale.
The Millere, that fordronken was al pale,
So that unneth upon his hors he sat,
He nolde avalen neither hood ne hat,
Ne abyde no man for his curteisie,
But in Pilates voys he gan to crie,
And swoor by armes, and by blood and bones,

I kan a noble tale for the nones,
With which I wol now quite the Knyghtes tale.
Oure Hooste saugh that he was dronke of ale,
And seyde. Abyd, Robyn, my leve brother,
Som better man shal telle us first another;
Abyde, and lat us werken thristfully.
By Goddes soule, quod he, that wol nat I,
for I wol speke, or elles go my wey.

Oure Hoost answerde. Tel on a devely wey!
Thou art a fool, thy wit is overcome.

Now herkneth, quod the Millere, alle & some;
But first I make a protestacioun

That I am dronke, I knowe it by my soun,
And therfore if that I mysspeke or seye,

Wite it the ale of Southwerk, I you prey;
for I wol telle a legende and a tyf,

Bothe of a carpenter and of his wyf,
How that a clerk hath set the wrightes cappe.

The Reve answerde and seyde. Stynt thy
clappe!

Lat be thy lewed, dronken harlotrye;
It is a synne, and eek a greet folye

Heere bigynneth the Millere his tale.

WHILOM ther was dwel-
lyng at Oxenford
A riche gnos, that ges-
tes heeld to bord,
And of his craft he
was a carpenter.
With hym ther was
dwellynge a povre
scoler
Hadde lerned art, but

al his fantasye
Was turned for to lerne astrologye,
And koude a certeyn of conclusiouns,
To demen by interrogaciouns,

If that men asked hym in certein houres

To aseyren any man, or hym defame,
And eek to bryngen wyves in swich fame;
Thou mayst ynogh of othere thynges seyn.
This dronke Millere spak ful soone ageyn
And seyde. Leve brother Osewold,
Who hath no wyf he is no cokewold,
But I sey nat therfore that thou art oon,
Ther been ful goode wyves many oon,
And evere a thousand goode ayeys oon
badde;

That knowestow wel thyself, but if thou
madde.

Why artow angry with my tale now?
I have a wyf pardee, as wel as thou,

Yet nolde I, for the oxen in my plogh,
Taken upon me moore than ynogh;

As demen of myself that I were oon,
I wol bileve wel that I am noon.

An housbonde shal nat been inquisityf
Of Goddes pryvete, nor of his wyf;

So he may fynde Goddes foysoun there,
Of the remenant nedeth nat enquire.

WHAT sholde I moore seyn, but this
Millere

He nolde his wordes for no man
forbere,

But told his cherles tale in his manere.
Methynketh that I shal reherce it heere,

And therfore every gentyl wight I prey,
for Goddes love, demeth nat that I seye

Of yvel entente, but that I moot reherce
hir tales alle, be they better or worse,

Or elles falsen som of my mateere;
And therfore, who so list it nat yheere,

Turne over the leef and chese another tale;
for he shal fynde ynowe, grete and smale,

Of storial thyng that toucheth gentillesse,
And eek moralitee, and hoolynesse,

Blameth nat me if that ye chese amys.
The Millere is a cherl, ye knowe wel this,

So was the Reve, and othere manye mo,
And harlotrie they tolden bothe two.

Hvyseth yow, putteth me out of blame,
And eek men shal nat make ernest of game.

Whan that men sholde have droghte or elles
shoures,

Or if men asked hym what sholde bifalle
Of every thyng, I may nat rekene hem alle.

THIS clerk was cleped hende Nicholas.
Of deerne love he koude, and of solas,

And therto he was sleigh and ful privee,
And lyk a mayden, meke for to see.

A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye
Allone, withouten any compaignye,

ful fetisly ydight, with herbes swoote,
And he hymself as sweete as is the roote

Of lycorys, or any cetewale.
His almageste, and bookes grete and smale,

His astrelabie, longynge for his art,

His augrym stones, layen faire apart,
On shelve couched at his beddes heed,
His presse ycovered with a faldyng reed,
And all above ther lay a gay sautrie,
On which he made anyghtes melodie
So swetely, that al the chambre rong,
And Angelus ad virginem, he song;
And after that he song the kynges noote;
ful often blessed was his myrie throte,
And thus this sweete clerk his tyme spent
After his freendes fyndyng and his rente.

HIS carpenter hadde wedded newe a wyf,
Which that he loved moore than his lyf;
Of eighteteene yeer she was of age,
Jalous he was, and heeld hire narwe in cage,
for she was yong and wyld, and he was old,
And demed hymself been lik a cokewold.
He knew nat Catoun, for his wit was rude,
That bad man sholde wedde his simylitude.
Men sholde wedden after hire estaat,
for youthe and elde is often at debaat;
But sith that he was fallen in the snare,
He moste endure, as oother folk, his care.

HIR was this yonge wyf, and therwithal,
As any wezele, hir body gent and smal.
A ceint she wered, ybarred al of silk;
A barmclooth eek as whit as morne milk
Upon hir lendes, ful of many a goore;
Whit was hir smok, and broyden al bifoore,
And eek bihynde, on hir coler aboute,
Of colblak silk withinne and eek withoute.
The tapes of hir white voluper
Were of the same suyte of hir coler;
Hir filet brood, of silk and set ful hye;
And sikertly she hadde a likerous eye.
ful smale y pulled were hire browes two,
And tho were bent, and blake as any sloo.
She was ful moore blisful on to see
Than is the newe perejonette tree,
And softer than the wolfe is of a wether;
And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether,
Tasseled with grene and perled with latoun.
In al this world, to seken up and down,
Ther nas no man so wys that koude thenche
So gay a popelote, or swich a wenche.
ful brighter was the shynyng of hir hewe
Than in the Tour the noble yforged newe.

AT of hir song, it was as loude and
yerne
As any swalwe chiterynge on a berne.
Therto she koude skippe and make game,
As any kyde, or calf, folwyng his dame.
Hir mouth was sweete as bragot or the meeth,
Or hoord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.
Wynsyng she was, as is a joly colt;
Long as a mast, and uprighte as a bolt.
A brooch sche baar upon hir love coler,
As brood as is the boos of a bokeler;
Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye;
She was a prymerole, a piggesnye
for any lord to ligen in his bedde,
Or yet for any good yeman to wedde.

NOW, sire, and eft, sire, so bifel the cas,
That on a day this hende Nicholas,
fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye
Whil that hir housbonde was at Oseneye,
As clerkes ben ful subtile and ful queynte,
And prively he caughte hire by the queynte,
And seyde, ywis, But if ich have my wille,
for deerne love of thee, lemman, I spille;
And heeld hire harde by the haunche bones,
And seyde, Lemman, love me al atones,
Or I wol dyen, also God me save!

And she sproong, as a colt doth in the trave,
And with hir heed sche wryed faste away,
And seyde, I wol nat kisse thee, by my fey!
Why, lat be! quod she, lat be, Nicholas!
Or I wol crie out, Harrow, and Alas!

Do wey youre handes, for your curteisye!
HIS Nicholas gan mercy for to crye,
And spak so faire, and profred him so faste,
That she hir love hym graunted atte laste,
And swoor hir ooth, by Seint Thomas of Kent,
That she wol been at his comandement
Whan that she may hir leyser wel espie.
Myn housbonde is so ful of jalousie,
That but ye wayte wel and been privee,
I woot right wel I nam but deed, quod she;
Ye moste been ful deerne, as in this cas.

Nay, therof care thee noght, quod Nicholas,
A clerk hadde litherly biset his whyle
But if he koude a carpenter bigyle.
And thus they been accorded and ysworn
To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforn.
Whan Nicholas had doon thus everideel,
And thakked hire aboute the lendes weel,
He kist hire sweete, and taketh his sawtrie,
And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodie.
Channe fil it thus, that to the paryssh chirche,
Christes owene werkes for to wirche,
This goode wyf went on an haliday;
Hir forheed shoon as bright as any day,
So was it wasshen whan she leet hir werk.

NOW was ther of that chirche a parissch clerk,
The which that was ycleped Absolon;
Crul was his heer and as the gold it shoon,
And strouted as a fanne, large and brode,
ful streight and evene lay his joly shode.
His rode was reed, his eyen greye as goos;
With Dowles wyndow corven on his shoos,
In hosen rede he wente fetisly.
Yclad he was ful smal and proprety,
Al in a kirtel of a lyght waget,
ful faire and thikke been the poyntes set;
And ther upon he hadde a gay surpys,
As whit as is the blosme upon the rys.
A myrie child he was, so God me save,
Wel koude he laten blood, and clippe and shave,
And maken a chartre of lond or acquitaunce.
In twenty manere koude he trippe and daunce,
After the scole of Oxenforde tho,
And with his legges casten to and fro,
And pleyen songs on a small rubible;
Therto he song som tyme a loud quynnyble,
And as wel koude he pleye on his giterne.

In al the toun nas brewhous ne taverne
That he ne visited with his solas,
Ther any gaylard tappestere was.
But, sooth to seyn, he was somdel squaymous
Of fartyng, and of speche daungerous.

HIS Absolon, that jolif was and gay,
Gooth with a sencer on the haliday,
Sensyng the wyves of the parisshe faste,
And many a lovely look on hem he caste;
And namely on this carpenteris wyf.
To loke on hire hym thoughte a myrie lyf,
She was so propre, and sweete, and likerous.
I dar wel seyn if she hadde been a mous,
And he a cat, he wold hire hente anon.
This parissch clerk, this joly Absolon,
hath in his herte swich a love/longyng,
That of no wyf ne took he noon offryng;
for curteisye, he seyde, he wolde noon.

HE moone, whan it was nyght, ful brighte
shoon,
And Absolon his gyterne hath ytake,
for paramours he thoghte for to wake;
And forth he gooth, jolif and amorous,
Til he cam to the carpenteres hous,
A litel after cokkes had ycrowe,
And dressed hym up by a shot wyndowe
That was upon the carpenteres smal,
He syngeth in his voys gentil and smal,
Now, deere lady, if thy wille be,
I pray yow that ye wole thynke on me,
ful wel acordaunt to his gyternyng.

This carpenter awook, and herde hym synge,
And spak unto his wyf, and seyde anon,
What, Alison! herestow nat Absolon
That chaunteth thus under oure boures wal?
And she answerde hir housbonde therwithal,
Vis, God woot, John, I heere it every del.

This passeth forth; what wol ye bet than weel?
RO day to day this joly Absolon
So woveth hire that hym is wo bigon;
He waketh al the nyght and al the day,
he kembeth his lokkes brode, and made hym gay,
he woveth hire by meenes and brocage,
And swoor he wolde been hir owene page;
he syngeth, brokkyng as a nyghtyngale;
he sente hire pyment, meeth, and spiced ale,
And wafres pipyng hoot out of the glede,
And for she was of toun, he profreth meede;
for som folk wol ben wonnen for richesse,
And somme for strokes, and somme for gen-
tillesse.

Somtyme to shewe his lightnesse & maistrye
he pleyeth Herodes upon a scaffold hye,
But what availleth hym, as in this cas?
She loveth so this hende Nicholas,
That Absolon may blowe the bukkes horn;
he ne had for his labour but a scorn;
And thus she maketh Absolon hire ape,
And al his ernest turneth til a jape.
ful sooth is this proverbe, it is no lye,
Men seyn right thus, Alwey the nye slye
Maketh the ferre leewe to be looth,
for though that Absolon be wood or wrooth,

Bycause that he fer was from hire sighte,
This nye Nicholas stood in his lighte.

NOW bere thee wel, thou hende Nicholas,
for Absolon may waille and synge, Alas!
And so bifel it on a Saterdag,
This carpenter was goon til Osenay,
And hende Nicholas and Alisoun
Acorded been to this conclusioun,
That Nicholas shal shapen hym a wyle,
This sely jalous housbonde to bigyle;
And, if so be the game wente aright,
She sholde slepen in his arm al nyght,
for this was his desir and hire also.
And right anon, withouten wordes mo,
This Nicholas no lenger wolde tarie,
But dooth ful softe unto his chambre carie
Bothe mete and drynke for a day or tweye;
And to hire housbonde bad hire for to seye,
If that he axed after Nicholas,
She sholde seye she nyste where he was;
Of al that day she saugh hym nat with eye;
She trowed that he was in maladye,
for, for no cry, hir mayde koude hym calle,
he nolde answer for nothyng that myghte falle.

This passeth forth al thilke Saterdag,
That Nicholas stille in his chambre lay,
And eet and sleepe, or dide what hym leste;
Til Sondag that the sonne gooth to reste
This sely carpenter hath greet merveye
Of Nicholas, or what thyng myghte hym eyle,
And seyde, I am adrad, by Seint Thomas,
It stondeth nat aright with Nicholas.
God shilde that he deyde sodeynly;
This world is now ful tikel sikertly;
I saugh today a cors yborn to chirche,
That now on Monday last I saugh hym wirche.
Go up, quod he unto his knave anon,
Clepe at his dore, or knokke with a stoon,
Looke how it is, and tel me boldely.

This knave gooth him up ful sturdily,
And at the chambre dore whil that he stood,
he cride and knokked as that he were wood:
What how! what do ye, maister Nicholas?
How may ye slepen at the longe day?
But al for noght, he herde nat a word.
An hole he foond ful lowe upon a bord,
Ther as the cat was wont in for to crepe;
And at that hole he looked in ful depe,
And at the laste he hadde of hym a sighte.
This Nicholas sat gapyng evere uprighte,
As he had kiked on the newe moone.
Adoun he gooth, and tolde his maister soone
In what array he saugh that ilke man.
HIS carpenter to blessen hym bigan,
And seyde, Help us, Seinte frydeswyde!
A man woot litel what hym shal bityde;
This man is falle with his astromye
In som woodnesse, or in som agonye.
I thoghte ay wel how that it sholde be,
Men sholde nat knowe of Goddes pryvete.
Ye, blessed be alwey a lewed man,
That noght but oonly his bileve kan.
So ferde another clerk with astromye;

He walked in the feeldes, for to pryce
Upon the sterres, what ther sholde bifalle;
Til he was in a marlepit yfalle;
He saugh nat that. But yet, by Seint Thomas,
Me reweth soore of hende Nicholas;
He shal be rated of his studying,
If that I may, by Ihesus, hevene kyng!
Get me a staf, that I may underspore,
Whil that thou, Robyn, hevest of the dore;
He shal out of his studying, as I gesse.
And to the chambre dore he gan hym dresse.
His knave was a strong carl for the nones,
And by the haspe he haaf it of atones,
Into the floore the dore fil anon.
This Nicholas sat ay as stille as stoon,
And evere gaped upward into the air.
And hente hym by the sholdres myghtily
And shook hym harde, and cride spitously,
What, Nicholay! what how! what! looke adoun!
Awake! and thenk on Cristes passioun!
I crouche thee from elves and fro wightes,
Therwith the nyghtspel seyde he anonrightes,
On foure halves of the hous aboute,
And on the thresshold of the dore withoute:
Jhesu Crist and Seint Benedight,
Blesse this hous from every wikked wight,
for nyghtes verye the white Pater noster.
Where wentestow, Seint Petres soster?
And atte laste this hende Nicholas
Gan for to sike soore, and seyde, Alas!
Shal al this world be lost eftsoones now?
This carpenter answerde, What seystow?
What? thenk on God, as we doon, men that
swynke.
This Nicholas answerde, fecche me drynke;
And after wol I speke in pryvete
Of certeyn thyng that toucheth me and thee;
I wol telle it noon oother man, certeyn.
This carpenter goth down, and comth ageyn,
And broghte of myghty ale a large quart;
And whan that ech of hem had dronke his
part,
This Nicholas his dore faste shette
And down the carpenter by hym he sette.
He seyde, John, myn hooste lief and deere,
Thou shalt upon thy trouthe swere me heere
That to no wight thou shalt this conseil wreye,
for it is Cristes conseil that I seye;
And if thou telle it man thou art forlore,
for this vengeance thou shalt han therfore
That if thou wreye me, thou shalt be wood.
Nay, Crist forbede it, for his hooly blood!
Quod tho this sely man, I nam no labbe,
Ne, though I seye, I am nat lief to gabbe;
Sey what thou wolt, I shal it nevere telle
To child ne wyf, by hym that harwed helle!
Now, John, quod Nicholas, I wol nat lye;
I have yfoundede in myn astrologye,
As I have looked in the moone bright,
That now, a Monday next, at quarter nyght,
Shal falle a reyn, and that so wilde and wood,
That half so greet was nevere Noes flood.

This world, he seyde, in lasse than an hour
Shal al be dreynt, so hidous is the shour;
Thus schal mankynde drenche, and lese hir lyf.
This carpenter answerde, Alas, my wyf!
And shal she drenche? Alas! myn Alisoun!
for sorwe of this he fil almost adoun,
And seyde, Is ther no remedie in this cas?
Why, yis, for Gode, quod hende Nicholas,
If thou wolt werken aftir loore and reed;
Thou mayst nat werken after thyn owene heed,
for thus seith Salomoun, that was ful trewe,
Werk al by conseil, and thou shalt nat rewe;
And if thou werken wolt by good conseil,
I undertake, withouten mast and seyl,
Yet shal I saven hire and thee and me.
Hastow nat herd how saved was Noe,
Whan that our Lord hadde warned hym biforn
That al the world with water sholde be lorn?
Yis, quod this carpenter, ful yooore ago.
Hastow nat herd, quod Nicholas, also
The sorwe of Noe with his felaweshipe
Er that he myghte brynge his wyf to shipe?
Hym hadde levere, I dar wel undertake,
At thilke tyme, than alle his wetheres blake,
But she hadde had a shipe hirself allone.
And therfore, woostow what is best to doone?
This asketh haste, and of an hastif thyng
Men may nat preche or maken taryng.
Anon go gete us faste into this in
A knedyng trogh, or ellis a kymelyn,
for ech of us, but loke that they be large,
In whiche we mowe swymme as in a barge,
And han therinne vitaille suffisant
But for a day; fy on the remenant,
The water shal aslake and goon away
Aboute pryme upon the nexte day.
But Robyn may nat wite of this, thy knave,
Ne eek thy mayde Gille I may nat save;
Axe nat why, for though thou aske me,
I wol nat tellen Goddes pryvete;
Suffiseth thee, but if thy wittes madde,
To han as greet a grace as Noe hadde.
Thy wyf shal I wel saven, out of doute.
Go now thy wey and speed thee heeraboute.
But whan thou hast for hire and thee and me
Ygeten us thise knedyng/tubbes thre,
Channe shaltow hange hem in the roof ful hye,
That no man of oure purveiance spye,
And whan thou thus hast doon as I have seyde,
And hast oure vitaille faire in hem yleyd,
And eek an ax, to smyte the corde atwo
Whan that the water comth, that we may go,
And broke an hole an heigh, upon the gable,
Unto the gardynward, over the stable,
That we may frely passen forth oure way
Whan that the grete shour is goon away.
Channe shaltow swymme as myrie, I undertake,
As dooth the white doke after hire drake;
Channe wol I clepe, how Alisoun! how John!
Be myrie, for the flood wol passe anon.
And thou wolt seyn, Hayl, maister Nicholay!
Good morwe, I se thee wel, for it is day!
And thanne shul we be lordes al oure lyf

Of al the world, as Noe and his wyf.
But of o thyng I warne thee ful right,
Be welayved on that ilke nyght
That we ben entred into shippes bord,
That noon of us ne speke nat a word,
Ne clepe, ne crie, but been in his preyere;
for it is Goddes owene heeste deere.
Thy wyf and thou moote hange fer atwynne,
for that bitwixe yow shal be no synne,
Na moore in looking than ther shal in deede;
This ordinance is seyde; so God thee speede.
Tomorwe at nyght, whan folk ben alle aslepe,
Into our knedyng/tubbes wol we crepe,
And sitten there, abiding Goddes grace.
Go now thy wey, I have no lenger space
To make of this no lenger sermonyng,
Men seyn thus, Sende the word and sey no thyng;
Thou art so wys, it needeth thee nat teche,
Go, save oure lyf, and that I the biseche.
This sely carpenter goth forth his wey;
ful ofte he seith Alas, and Weylawey,
And to his wyf he tolde his pryvete,
And she was war, and knew it bet than he,
What al this queynte cast was for to seye.
But natheles she ferde as she wolde deye,
And seyde, Alas! go forth thy wey anon,
Help us to scape, or we been lost echon!
I am thy trewe, verray, wedded wyf,
Go, deere spouse, and help to save oure lyf!
O! which a greet thyng is affeccoun!
Men may dyen of ymaginacioun,
So depe may impressioun be take.
This sely carpenter bigynneth quake;
Hym thynketh verraily that hemay see,
Noes flood, come walwinge as the see,
To drenchen Alisoun, his hony deere.
He wepeth, weyleth, maketh sory cheere;
He siketh, with ful many a sory swogh;
He gooth and geteth hym a knedyng trogh,
And after that a tubbe and a kymelyn,
And pryvely he sente hem to his in,
And heng hem in the roof in pryvete.
His owene hand he made laddres thre,
To clymben by the ronges and the stalkes,
Into the tubbes, hangyng in the balkes;
And hem vitailleth, bothe trogh and tubbe,
With breed and chese and good ale in a jubbe,
Suffisyng right ynogh as for a day.
But er that he hadde maad al this array,
He sente his knave, and eek his wenche also,
Upon his nede to London for to go;
And on the Monday, whan it drow to nyght,
He shette his dore withoute candel/lyght,
And dresseth alle thyng as it shal be;
And shortly, up they clomben alle thre;
They sitten stille, wel a furlong way.
Now, Pater noster, clom! seyde Nicholay;
And clom, quod John, and clom, seyde
Alisoun.
This carpenter seyde his devocioun,
And stille he sit and biddeth his preyere,
Awaityng on the reyn, if he it heere.
The dede sleepe for wery bisynesse

fil on this carpenter, right as I gesse
Aboute corfew/tyme, or litel moore;
for travaille of his goost he groneth soore,
And eft he routeth, for his heed mystlay.
Doun of the laddre stalketh Nicholay,
And Alisoun, ful softe adoun she spedde;
Withouten wordes mo they goon to bedde
Ther as the carpenter is wont to lye.
Ther was the revel and the melodye;
And thus lith Alisoun and Nicholas,
In bisynesse of myrthe and of solas,
Til that the belle of laudes gan to ryng,
And freres in the chauncel gonne synge.
This parissch clerk, this amorous Absolon,
That is for love alwey so wobigon,
Upon the Monday was at Oseneye
With compaignye, hym to disporte and pleye,
And axed upon cas a cloisterer
ful pryvely after John the carpenter.
And he drough hym apart out of the chirche,
And seyde, I noot, I saugh hym heere nat wirche
Syn Saterday; I trow that he be went
for tymber, ther our abbot hath hym sent;
for he is wont for tymber for to go,
And dwellen at the grange a day or two;
Or elles he is at his hous, certeyn;
Where that he be, I kan nat soothly seyn.
This Absolon ful joly was and light,
And thoghte, Now is tyme to wake al
nyght,
for sikirly I saugh him nat stiringe
Aboute his dore syn day bigan to spryng.
So moot I thryve, I shal, at cokkes crowe
ful pryvely knokken at his wyndowe
That stant ful lowe upon his boures wal.
To Alisoun now wol I tellen al
My love/longyng, for yet I shal nat mysse
That at the leste wey I shal hire kisse.
Som maner confort shal I have, parfay.
My mouth hath icched al this longe day;
That is a signe of kysyng atte leste.
Al nyghte me mette eek, I was at a feeste;
Therefore I wol goon slepe an houre or tweye,
And al the nyght thanne wol I wake and pleye.
Whan that the firste cok hath crowe, anon
Upriist this joly lover Absolon,
And hym arraieyth gay, at poynt/devys;
But first he cheweth greyn and lycorys,
To smellen sweete, er he hadde kembd his heer.
Under his tonge a trewe/love he beer,
for therby wende he to ben gracious.
He rometh to the carpenteres hous,
And stille he stant under the shot/wyndowe,
Unto his brist it raughte, it was so lowe;
And softe he knokketh with a semy/soun:
What do ye, hony/comb, sweete Alisoun,
My faire bryd, my sweete cynamome?
Awaketh, lemman myn, and speketh to me.
Wel litel thynken ye upon my wo,
That for youre love I swete ther I go.
No wonder is, thogh that I swelte and swete,
I moorne as dooth a lamb after the tete;
Ywis, lemman, I have swich love/longyng.

That lik a turtel trewe is my moornyng;
I may nat ete na moore than a mayde.
Go fro the wyndow, jakke fool, she sayde,
As help me God, it wol nat be, com ba me;
I love another, and elles I were to blame,
Wel bet than thee, by Jhesu, Absolon!
Go forth thy wey, or I wol caste a ston,
And lat me slepe, a twenty devel wey!
Alas, quod Absolon, and weylawey!
That trewe love was evere so ylle biset!
Channe kysse me, syn it may be no bet,
for Jhesus love, and for the love of me.
Wiltow thanne go thy wey? quod she.
Ye certes, lemman, quod this Absolon.
Channe make thee redy, quod she, I come anon,
And unto Nicholas she seyde stille,
Now hust, and thou shalt laughen al thy fille.
This Absolon down sette hym on his knees,
And seyde, I am a lord at alle degrees,
for after this I hope ther cometh moore.
Lemman, thy grace, and sweete bryd, thyn oore.
The wyndow she undoth, and that in haste;
Have do, quod she, com of, and speed thee faste,
Lest that oure neighebores thee espie.
This Absolon gan wype his mouth ful drie;
Dirk was the nyght as pich, or as the cole,
And at the wyndow out she pitte hir hole,
And Absolon, hym fil no bet ne wers,
But with his mouth he kiste hir naked ers
ful savourly, er he was war of this.
Abak he sturte, and thoughte it was amys,
for wel he wiste a womman hath no berd;
He felte a thyng al rough and long yherd,
And seyde, fy, alas, what have I do?
Tehee! quod she, and clapte the wyndow to;
And Absolon gooth forth a sory pas.
A berd, a berd! quod hende Nicholas,
By Goddes corpus, this goth faire and weel!
This sely Absolon herde every deel,
And on his lippe he gan for anger byte;
And to hymself he seyde, I shall thee quyte!
A rubbeth now, who froteth now his
lippes
With dust, with sond, with straw, with
clooth, with chippes,
But Absolon? that seith ful ofte, Alas!
My soule bitake I unto Sathanas,
But me were levere than al this toun, quod he,
Of this despit awroken for to be.
Alas! quod he, alas! I nadde ybleynt;
His hoothe love was coold and al yqueynt;
for fro that tyme that he hadde kiste hir ers,
Of paramours he sette nat a hers;
for he was heeled of his maladie,
ful ofte paramours he gan deffie,
And weepe as dooth a child that is ybete.
A softe paas he wente over the strete
Until a smyth men cleped daun Gerveys,
That in his forge smythed plough/harneys;
He sharpeþ shaar and kultour bisily.
This Absolon knokketh al esily,
And seyde, Ando, Gerveys, and that anon.
What, who artow? I am heere, Absolon.

What, Absolon! for Cristes sweete tree,
Why rise ye so rathe? ey benedicitee!
What eytleth yow? Som gay gert, God it woot,
Hath brought yow thus upon the viritoot;
By seinte Note, ye woot wel what I mene.
This Absolon ne roghte nat a bene
Of al his pley; no word agayn he yaf;
He hadde moore tow on his distaf
Than Gerveys knew, and seyde, Freend so deere,
That hoothe kultour in the chymenee heere,
As lene it me, I have therwith to doone,
And I wol brynge it thee agayn ful soone.
Gerveys answerde, Certes, were it gold,
Or in a poke nobles alle untold,
Thou sholdest have, as I am trewe smyth;
Ey, Cristes fool! what wol ye do therwith?
Therof, quod Absolon, be as be may,
I shal wel telle it thee tomorwe day.
And caughte the kultour by the colde stele,
ful softe out at the dore he gan to stele,
And wente unto the carpenteres wal.
He cogheth first, and knokketh therwithal
Upon the wyndowe, right as he hide er.
This Absolon answerde, Who is ther
That knokketh so? I warante it a theef.
Why nay, quod he, God woot, my sweete leef,
I am thyn Absolon, my deerelyng.
Of gold, quod he, I have thee broght a ryng;
My mooder yaf it me, so God me save;
ful fyn it is, and therto wel ygrave;
This wol I yeve thee, if thou me kisse.
This Nicholas was risen for to pisse,
And thoughte he wolde amenden al the jape,
He sholde kisse his ers, er that he scape;
And up the wyndowe dide he hastily,
And out his ers he putteth pryvely
Over the buttok, to the haunches/bon.
And therwith spak this clerk, this Absolon:
DEK, sweete bryd, I noot nat where thou art.
This Nicholas anon leet fle a fart,
As greet as it had been a thonder/dent,
That with the strook he was almoost yblent;
And he was redy with his iren hoot,
And Nicholas amydde the ers he smoot.
Of gooth the skyn, an hande/brede aboute,
The hoothe kultour brende so his toutte;
And for the smert he wende for to dye.
As he were wood, for wo he gan to crye,
Help! water! water! help, for Goddes herte!
This carpenter out of his slomber sterte,
And herde oon crien Water, as he were wood,
And thoughte, Alas, now comth Nowelis flood!
He sit hym up withouten wordes mo,
And with his ax he smoot the corde atwo,
And down gooth al, he foond neither to selle,
Ne breed ne ale, til he cam to the selle
Upon the floor; and ther aswowne he lay.
O sturte hire Alisoun, and Nicholas,
And eriden, Out! & Harrow! in the strete.
The neighebores, bothe smale and grette
In ronnen for to gauren on this man
That yet aswowne he lay, bothe pale and wan;
for with the fal he brosten hadde his arm;

But stonde he moste unto his owene harm,
for whan he spak he was anon bore down
With hende Nicholas and Alisoun.
They tolden every man that he was wood,
He was agast so of Nowelis flood
Churgh fantasie, that of his vanytee
He hadde ybought hym knedyng/tubbes thre,
And hadde hem hanged in the roof above;
And that he preyde hem, for Goddes love,
To sitten in the roof, par compaignye.
The folk gan laughen at his fantasie;
Into the roof they kiken & they gape,
And turned al his harm unto a jape;
for whatso that this carpenter answerde,
It was for noght, no man his reson herde;
With othes grette he was so sworn adoun,
That he was holden wood in al the toun,
for every clerk anonright heeld with oother;
They seyde, The man was wood, my leeve
broother.
And every wight gan laughen of this stryf.
This swyved was this carpenteres wyf,
for al his kepyng and his jalousey;
And Absolon hath kist hir nether eye;
And Nicholas is scalded in the towte;
This tale is doon, and God save al the rowte!
Here endeth the Millere his Tale.

The prologe of the Reves Tale.

MAN folk hadde laughen at this
nyce cas
Of Absolon & hende Nicholas,
Diverse folk, diversely they
seyde,
But for the moore part, they
loughe and pleide;
Ne at this tale I saugh no man hym greve,
But it were oonly Osewold the Reve.
Bycause he was of carpenteris craft
A litel ire is in his herte ylaft.
He gan to grucche and blamed it a lite.
So theek, quod he, ful wel koude I yow quite,
With blyeryng of a proude millers eye,
If that me liste speke of ribaudye,
But ik am oold, me list no pley for age,
Gras/tyme is doon, my fodder is now forage;
This white tope writeth myne olde yeres;
Myn herte is mowled also as myne heres,
But if I fare as dooth an openers;
That ilke fruyt is ever leng the wers

HEERE BIGYNNETH THE REVES TALE.

A Trumpyngtoun, nat
fer fro Cantebrygge,
Ther gooth a brook, &
over that a brigge,
Upon the whiche brook
ther stant a melle;
And this is verray sooth
that I yow tell.
A millere was ther dwel-
lynge many a day,

Til it be roten in mullok, or in stree.
We olde men, I drede, so fare we;
Til we be roten kan we nat be rype.
We hoppen ay, whil that the world wol pype,
for in oure wyl ther stiketh evere a nayl
To have an hoor heed and a grene tayl,
As hath a leek; for thogh oure myght be goon,
Oure wyl desireth folie evere in oon;
for whan we may nat doon, than wol we speke,
Yet in oure asschen olde is fyr yreke.
foure gleedes han we, whiche I shal devyse,
Hvaunting, lying, anger, coveitise.
Thise four sparkle longen unto eelde.
Oure olde lymmes mowe wel been unweelde,
But wyl ne shal nat faillen, that is gooth;
And yet ik have alwey a coltes tooth,
As many a yeer as it is passed henne
Syn that my tappe of lif bigan to renne.
for sikerly, whan I was bore, anon
Deeth drough the tappe of lyf and leet it gon;
And ever sithe hath so the tappe yronne,
Til that almoost al empty is the tonne.
The stream of lyf now droppeth on the chymbe,
The sely tonge may wel ryng and chymbe
Of wrecchednesse that passed is ful yore;
With olde folk, save dotage, is namore.
HAN that oure Hoost hadde herd
this sermonyng,
He gan to speke as lordly as a kyng.
He seide: What amounteth al this wit?
What, shul we speke alday of hooly writ?
The devel made a Reve for to preche,
And of a souter a shipman or a leche.
Sey forth thy tale, and tarie nat the tyme,
Lo, Depeford, and it is half wey pryme.
Lo, Grenewych, ther many a shreve is inne;
It were al tyme thy tale to bigynne.
Now, sires, quod this Osewold the Reve,
I pray yow alle that ye nat yow greve,
Thogh I answer and somdeel sette his howe,
for leveful is, with force, force of showe;
This dronke Millere hath ytold us heer,
How that bigyled was a carpenteer,
Peraventure in scorn, for I am oon,
And, by youre leve, I shal him quite anon.
Right in his cherles termes wol I speke;
I pray to God his nekke mote breke.
He kan wel in myn eye seen a stalke,
But in his owene he kan nat seen a balke.
Thus endeth the prologe of the Reve.

As eny pecock he was proud and gay,
Pipen he koude, and fissahe, and nettes beete,
And turne coppes, and wel wrastle and sheete;
And by his belt he baar a long panade,
And of a swerd ful trenchant was the blade.
A joly poppere baar he in his pouche,
Ther was no man, for peril, dorste hym touche;
A Sheffield thwitel baar he in his hose.
Round was his face, and camuse was his nose;
As piled as an ape was his skulle.

He was a market-betere atte fulle;
Ther dorste no wight hand upon hym legge,
That he ne swoor he sholde anon abegge.
THEEF he was forsooth of corn and mele,
And that a sly and usaunt for to stele.
His name was hoothe deynous Symkyn.
A wyf he hadde, ycomen of noble kyn;
The person of the toun hir fader was;
With hire he yaf ful many a panne of bras
for that Symkyn sholde in his blood allye.
She was yfostred in a nonnerye;
for Symkyn wolde no wyf, as he sayde,
But she were wel ynorissed and a mayde,
To saven his estaat of yomanrye;
And she was proud and peert as is a pye.
A ful fair sighte was it upon hem two
On haly dayes; biforn hire wolde he go
With his typet ybounde about his heed,
And she cam after in a gyte of reed;
And Symkyn hadde hosen of the same.
Ther dorste no wight clepen hire but Dame;
Was noon so hardy that wente by the weye
That with hire dorste rage, or ones pleye,
But if he wolde be slayn of Symkyn
With panade, or with knyf, or boidekyn;
for jalous folk ben perilous everemo;
Algate they wolde hire wywes wenden so.
And eek, for she was somdel smoterlich,
She was as digne as water in a dich,
As ful of hoker, and of bisemare.
Hir thoughte that a lady sholde hire spare,
What for hire kynrede and hir nortelric
That she hadde lerned in the nonnerie.
DOUGHTER hadde they bitwixe hem two
Of twenty yeer, withouten any mo,
Savyng a child that was of half-yeer age;
In cradel it lay, and was a propre page.
This wenche thikke and wel ygrowen was,
With kamuse nose, and eyen greye as glas;
Buttokes brode, and brestes rounde and hye,
But right fair was hire heer, I wol nat lye.
This person of the toun, for she was feir,
In purpos was to maken hire his heir,
Both of his catel and his mesuage,
And straunge he made it of hir mariage.
His purpos was for to bistowe hire hye
Into som worthy blood of auncetrye;
for hooly chirches good moot been despended
On hooly chirches blood, that is descended;
Therefore he wolde his hooly blood honoure,
Though that he hooly churche sholde devour.
Gret sokene hath this millere, out of doute,
With whete and malt of al the land aboute;
And nameliche, ther was a greet collegge,
Men clepen the Soler Halle at Cantebregge;
Ther was hir whete and eek hir malt ygrounde.
And on a day it happed, in a stounde,
Sik lay the maunciple on a maladye;
Men wenden wisly that he sholde dye;
for which this millere stal bothe mele and corn
An hundred tyme moore than biforn;
for therbiforn he stal but curteisly,
But now he was a theef outrageously;

for which the wardeyn chidde and made fare;
But therof sette the millere nat a tare;
He craketh boost, and swoor it was nat so.
THANNE were ther yonge poure clerkes two,
That dwelten in this halle of which I seye;
Testif they were, and lusty for to pleye;
And, oonly for hire myrthe and revelrye,
Upon the wardeyn bisily they crye,
To yewe hem leve, but a litel stounde,
To goon to mille and seen hir corn ygrounde.
And hardily they dorste leye hir nekke,
The millere shold nat stele hem half a pekke
Of corn, by sleighte, ne by force hem reve.
And at the laste the wardeyn yaf hem leve.
John highte that oon, & Aleyn highte that oother;
Of o toun were they born, that highte Strother,
fer in the North, I kan nat telle where.
This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,
And on an hors the sak he cast anon.
forth goth Aleyn the clerk, and also John,
With good sward and with bokeler by hir side,
John knew the wey, hem neddede no gyde;
And at the mille the sak adoun he layth.
Aleyn spak first, Al hayl, Symond, yfayth!
How fares thy faire doghter, and thy wyf?
Aleyn! welcome, quod Symkyn, by my lyf!
And John also, how now? What do ye heer?
Symond, quod John, by God, nede has na peer,
hym boes serve hymselfe that has na swain,
Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sayn.
Oure maniple, I hope he will be deed,
Swa werkes ay the wanges in his heed;
And forthy is I come, and eek Aleyn,
To grynde oure corn and carie it ham agayn.
I pray yow spede us heythen that ye may.
It shal be doon, quod Symkyn, by my fay!
What wol ye doon whil that it is in hande?
By God, right by the hopur wil I stande,
Quod John, and se how that the corn gas in;
Yet saugh I nevere, by my fader kyn,
How that the hopur waggas til and fra.
Aleyn answerde, Johan, wiltow swa?
Thanne wil I be byneth, by my croun!
And se how that the mele falles doun
Into the trough; that sal be my disport;
for John, yfayth, I may been of youre sort,
I is as ille a millere as are ye.
THIS millere smyled of hir nycetee,
And thoughte, Al this nys doon but for a
wyle;
They wene that no man may hem bigile;
But by my thrift, yet shal I blere hir eye,
for al the sleighte in hir philosophye.
The moore queynte creakes that they make,
The moore wol I stele whan I take.
Insteede of flour yet wol I yewe hem bren;
The gretteste clerkes been noght wisest men,
As whilom to the wolf thus spak the mare;
Of al hir art I counte noght a tare.
AT at the dore he gooth ful pryvely,
Whan that he saugh his tyme, softely.
He looketh up and doun til he hath founde
The clerkes hors, ther as it stood ybounde

Bihynde the mille, under a levesel;
And to the hors he goth hym faire and wel;
He strepeth of the brydel right anon,
And whan the hors was laus he gynneth gon
Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne,
forth with wehe! thurgh thikke & thurgh thenne.
This millere gooth agayn, no word he seyde,
But dooth his note and with the clerkes pleyde,
Til that hir corn was faire and weel ygrounde;
And whan the mele is sakked and ybounde,
This John goth out, and fynt his hors away,
And gan to crie, Harrow! and, Weylaway!
Our hors is lorn; Alayn, for Goddes banes
Stepe on thy feet; com out man, al at anes!
Alas, our wardeyn has his palfrey lorn!
This Aleyn al forgot bothe the mele and corn;
Al was out of his mynde his housbondrie.
What, whilk way is he geen? he gan to crie.
The wyf cam lepyng in ward with a ren;
She seyde, Alas, youre hors goth to the fen
With wild mares, as faste as he may go;
Unthank come on his hand that boond hym so,
And he that bettre sholde han knyt the reyne.
Alas, quod John, Aleyn, for Cristes peyne,
Lay doun thy sward, and I wil myn als wa;
Is ful wight, God waat, as is a raa;
By Goddes herte! he sal nat scape us bathe.
Why nadstow pit the capul in the lathe?
Ihayl, by God, Aleyn, thou is a fonne.
Toward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek John;
And whan the millere saugh that they
were gon,
He half a bussel of hir flour hath take,
And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake.
He seyde, I trowe the clerkes were aferd,
Yet kan a millere make a clerkes berd
for al his art; now lat hem goon hir weye.
Lo wher they goon; ye, lat the children pleye;
They gete hym nat so lightly, by my croun!
THIS sely clerkes rennen up and doun
With, Keepe! keepe! stand! stand! Jossa,
warderere!
Ga whistle thou, and I shal kepe hym heere.
But shortly, til that it was verray nyght
They koude nat, though they do al hir myght,
Hir capul cacche, he ran alwey so faste,
Til in a dych they caughte hym atte laste.
Wery and weat, as beest is in the reyn,
Comth sely John, and with him comth Aleyn.
Alas! quod John, the day that I was born!
Now are we dryve til hethyng and til scorn;
Oure corn is stolon, men wil us fooles calle,
Bathe the wardeyn and oure felawes alle,
And namely the millere; weylaway!
Thus pleyne John as he gooth by the way
Toward the mille, and Bayard in his hond.
The millere sittynge by the fire he fond,
for it was nyght, and forther myghte they noght;
But for the love of God they hym bisoght
Of herberwe and of ese as for hir peny.
The millere seyde agayn, If ther be eny,
Swich as it is, yet shal ye have youre part;

Myn hous is streit, but ye han lerned art;
Ye konne by argumentes make a place
A myle brood of twenty foot of space.
Lat se now if this place may suffise,
Or make it rowm with speche as is youre gise.
Now Symond, seyde John, by Seint Cutberd,
Ay is thou myrie, and this is faire answerd.
I have herd seyde, Man sal taa of twa thynges,
Styk as he fyndes, or taa styk as he brynges;
But specially I pray thee, hooste deere,
Get us som mete and drynke, and make us cheere,
And we wil payen trewely atte fulle;
With empty hand men may none haukes tulle;
Loo, heere our silver, redy for to spende.
THIS millere into toun his doghter sende
for ale and breed, and rosted hem a goos,
And boond hire hors, it sholde nat goon
loos;
And in his owene chambre hem made a bed,
With sheetes and with chalons faire yspred,
Noght from his owene bed ten foot or twelve.
His doghter hadde a bed al by herselfe,
Right in the same chambre, by and by,
It mighte be no bet, and cause why,
Ther was no roumer herberwe in the place.
They soupen, and they speke, hem to solace,
And drynken evere strong ale atte beste.
Aboute mydnyght wente they to reste.
TEL hath this millere vernysshed his heed;
ful pale he was fordronken, and nat reed.
He yexeth, & he speketh thurgh the nose,
As he were on the quakke, or on the pose.
To bedde he goth, and with hym goth his wyf,
As any jay she light was and jolyf;
So was hir joly whistle wel ywet.
The cradel at hir beddes feet is set,
To rokken, and to yewe the child to sowke;
And whan that dronken al was in the crowke,
To bedde went the doghter right anon;
To bedde wente Aleyn, and also John,
Ther nas na moore; hem nedede no dwale.
This millere hath so wisely bibbed ale,
That as an hors he snorteth in his sleepe;
Ne of his tayl bihynde he took no keepe.
His wyf bar him a burdon, a ful strong,
Men myghte hir rowtyng heere two furlong;
The wenche rowteth eek, par compaignye.
LEYN the clerk, that herd this melodye,
He poked John, and seyde, Slepestow?
Herdtow evere slyk a sang er now?
Lo, whilk a complying is ymel hem alle!
A wilde fyr upon thair bodyes falle!
Alha herkned evere slyk a ferly thyng?
Ye, they sal have the flour of il endyng!
This lange nyght ther tydes me na reste,
But yet, nafors, al sal be for the beste,
for, John, seyde he, als evere moot I thryve,
If that I may, yon wenche wil I swyve.
Som esement has lawe yshapen us;
for John, ther is a lawe that says thus,
That gif a man in a point be ygreved,
That in another he sal be releved.
Oure corn is stolon, shortly it is ne nay,

And we han had an if it al this day;
And syn I sal have neen amendement
Agayn my los, I wil have esement.
By Goddes sale! it sal neen other bee.
THIS John answerde, Alayn, avyse thee;
The millere is a perilous man, he seyde,
And gif that he out of his sleepe abreyde,
He mighte doon us bathe a vileynye.
Alayn answerde, I count hym nat a flye.
And up he rist, and by the wenche he crepte.
This wenche lay uprighte, and faste slepte
Til he so ny was, er she myghte espie,
That it had been to late for to crie;
And, shortly for to seyn, they were at on.
Now pley, Alayn, for I wol speke of John.
This John lith stille a furlong wey or two,
And to hymself he maketh routhe and wo;
Alas! quod he, this is a wikked jape;
Now may I seyn that I is but an ape;
Yet has my felawe somewhat for his harm,
He has the milleris doghter in his arm.
He aunted hym, and has his nedes sped,
And I lye as a draf/sek in my bed;
And when this jape is tald another day,
I sal been halde a daf, a cokenay.
I wil arise and aunte it, by my fayth;
Unhardy is unseely, thus men sayth.
And up he roos, and softely he wente
Unto the cradel, and in his hand it hente,
And baar it softe unto his beddes feet.
SOON after this the wyf hir rowtyng leet,
And gan awake, and wente hire out to pisse,
And cam agayn, and gan hir cradel mysse,
And groped heer and ther, but she foond noon.
Alas! quod she, I hadde almoost mysagoon;
I hadde almoost goon to the clerkes bed.
Ey, benedicite! thanne hadde I foule ysped.
And forth she gooth til she the cradel fond.
She gropeth alwey forther with hir hond,
And foond the bed and thoughte noght but good,
Bycause that the cradel by it stood,
And nyste wher she was, for it was derk,
But faire and wel she creepe in to the clerk;
And lith ful stille, and wolde han caught a sleepe.
Withinne a while this John the clerk up leepe,
And on this goode wyf he leith on soore;
So myrie a fit ne hadde she nat ful yore;
He priketh harde and depe as he were mad.
This joly tyf han thise two clerkes lad
Til that the thridde cok bigan to synge.
ALAYN wax wery in the dawninge,
For he had swonken at the longe nyght;
And seyde, fare weel, Malyne, sweete wight!
The day is come, I may no lenger byde;
But everemo, wherso I go or ryde,
I is thyn awen clerk, swa have I seel!
Now, deere lemman, quod she, go, fareweel!
But, er thou go, o thyng I wol thee telle;
Whan that thou wendest homward by the melle,
Right at the entree of the dore bihynde,
Thou shalt a cake of half a busschel fynde,
That was ymaked of thyn owene mele,
Which that I heelp me my fader for to stele;

And, goode lemman, God thee save and kepe!
And with that word almoost she gan to wepe.
Alayn uprist and thoughte, Er that it dawed,
I wol go crepen in by my felawe;
And fond the cradel with his hand anon.
By God! thoughte he, al wrang I have mysгон;
Myn heed is toty of my swynk tonyght,
That maketh me that I go nat aright.
I woot wel by the cradel I have mysгон;
Heere lith the millere and his wyf also.
And forth he goth, a twenty deval way,
Unto the bed thereas the millere lay.
He wende have copen by his felawe John,
And by the millere in he creepe anon,
And caughte hym by the nekke, & softe he spak
He seyde, Thou John, thou swynesheed, awak,
for Cristes saule, and heer a noble game;
for by that lord that called is seint Jame,
As I have thries in this shorte nyght
Swyved the milleres doghter bolt upright,
Whil thou hast as a coward been agast.
E, false harlot, quod the millere, hast?
A false traitour! false clerk! quod he,
Thou shalt be deed, by Goddes dignitee!
Who dorste be so boold to disparage
My doghter, that is come of swich lynage?
And by the throte bolle he caughte Alayn;
And he hente hym despitously agayn,
And on the nose he smoot hym with his fest.
Down ran the bloody stream upon his brest,
And in the floor, with nose and mouth to broke,
They walwe as doon two pigges in a poke;
And up they goon, and doun agayn anon,
Til that the millere sporned at a stoon,
And doun he fil bakward upon his wyf,
That wiste nothing of this nyce stryf;
for she was falle aslepe a lite wight
With John the clerk, that waked hadde al nyght;
And with the fal, out of hir sleepe she breyde.
Help, hooly croys of Bromeholm, she seyde,
In manus tuas! Lord, to thee I calle!
Awak, Symond! the feend is on us falle!
Myn herte is broken! help! I nam but deed!
Ther lyth oon on my wombe and on myn heed.
Helpe, Symkyn, for the false clerkes fighte!
THIS John stirte up, as soon as ever he
myghte,
And graspeth by the walles to and fro
To fynde a staf; and she stirte up also,
And knewe the estres bet than dide this John,
And by the wal a staf she foond anon.
And saugh a litel shymeryng of a light,
for at an hole in shoon the moone bright;
And by that light she saugh hem bothe two,
But sikerly she nyste who was who,
But as she saugh a whit thyng in hir eye:
And whan she gan the white thyng espye,
She wende the clerk hadde wered a volupeer,
And with the staf she drough ay neer and neer,
And wende han hit this Alayn at the fulle;
And smoot the millere on the pyled skulle,
And doun he gooth, and cride, Harrow! I dye!
Thise clerkes beete hym weel and lete hym lye,

And greythen hem and tooke hir hors anon,
And eek hire mele, and on hir wey they gon,
And at the mille yet they toke hir cake
Of half a busschel flour ful wel ybake.
THIS is the proude millere wel ybete,
And hath ylost the gryndyng of the whete,
And payed for the soper everideel
Of Alayn and of John, that bette hym weel;
his wyf is swyved, and his doghter als;
Lo! swich it is a millere to be fals.
And therfore this proverbe is seyde ful sooth,
Hym thar nat wene wel that yvele dooth;
A gylour shal hymself bigyled be,
And God, that sitteth heighe in Trinitee,
Save al this compaignye, grete and smale!
Thus have I quyte the Millere in my tale.
Here is ended the Reves Tale.

The prologe of the Cookes Tale.

THE Cook of London, whil the Reve
spak,
for joye him thoughte he clawed
him on the bak;
Ha, ha! quod he, for Cristes pas-
sion,
This millere hadde a sharpe conclusioun
Upon his argument of herbergage;
Wel seyde Salomon in his langage,
Ne brynge nat every man into thyn hous;
for herberwyng by nyghte is perilous.
Weloghte a man avysed for to be

HEERE BIGYNNETH THE COOKES TALE.

PRENTYS whilom dwel-
led in oure citee,
And of a craft of vitailliers
was hee.
Gailard he was as gold-
fynch in the shawe;
Broun as a berye, a propre
short felawe,
With lokkes blake ykempd
ful fetisly;
Dauncen he koude so wel and jolily,
That he was cleped Perkyn Revelour.
He was as ful of love and paramour
As is the hyve ful of hony sweete.
Wel was the wenche that with hym myght meete;
At every bridale wolde he synge and hoppe,
He loved bet the taverne than the shoppe.
For whan ther any ridyng was in Chepe,
Out of the shoppe thider wolde he lepe;
Til that he hadde al the sighte yseyn
And daunced wel, he wolde nat come ageyn;
And gadered hym a meynne of his sort
To hoppe and synge and maken swich disport;
And ther they setten stevene for to meete
To pleyen at the dys in swich a streete;
for in the toun nas ther no prentys
That fairer koude cast a paire of dys
Than Perkyn koude, and therto he was free
Of his dispense, in place of pryvete.

Whom that he broghte into his pryvete.
I pray to God, so yeve me sorwe and care,
If evere sithe I highte hogge of Ware,
Herde I a millere bettre yset awerk;
He hadde a jape of malice in the derk.
But God forbode that we stynten heere,
And therfore if ye vouchesauf to heere
A tale of me, that am a povre man,
I wol yow telle as wel as evere I kan
A litel jape that fil in oure citee.
Oure hoost answerde & seide, I graunte it thee;
Now telle on, Roger, looke that it be good;
for many a pastee hastow laten blood,
And many a jakke of Dovere hastow soold,
That hath been twies hoot and twies coold.
Of many a pilgrym hastow Cristes curs,
for of thy percely yet they fare the wors
That they han eten with thy stubbel goos,
for in thy shoppe is many a flye loos.
Now telle on, gentil Roger, by thy name,
But yet I pray thee be nat wroth for game,
A man may seye ful sooth in game and pley.
Thou seist ful sooth, quod Roger, by my fey!
But sooth pley, quaad pley, as the flemying seith;
And therfore, Herry Bailly, by thy feith,
Be thou nat wrooth, er we departen heer,
Though that my tale be of an hostileer:
But natheless I wol nat telle it yit;
But er we parte, ywis, thou shalt be quit;
And therwithal he lough and made cheere,
And seyde his tale as ye shul after heere.

The
Cookes
Tale

Of this
Tale
maked
Chaucer
na more

Anon he sente his bed and his array
Unto a compier of his owene sort
That lovede dys, and revel and disport,
And hadde a wyf that heeld for contenance
A shoppe, and swyved for hir sustenance....

The wordes of the Hooste to the compaignye.

HOOSTE saugh wel
that the bryghte sonne
The ark of his artificial day
had ronne
The ferthe part, and half
an houre and moore,
And though he were nat
depe expert in loore,
He wiste it was the eichte-
tethe day

Of April, that is messenger to May;
And saugh wel that the shadwe of every tree
Was, as in lengthe, the same quantitee
That was the body erect that caused it;
And therfore by the shadwe he took his wit
That Phebus, which that shoon so clere & bryghte,
Degrees was fyve and fourty clombe on highte;
And for that day, as in that latitude,
It was ten at the klokke, he gan conclude;
And sodeynly he plighte his hors aboute.
Lordynges, quod he, I warne yow, al this route
The fourthe party of this day is gon;
Now for the love of God and of Seint John,
Leseth no tyme, as ferforth as ye may.
Lordynges, the tyme wasteth nyght and day,
And steleth from us, what pryvely slepyng,
And what thurgh negligence in oure wakyng,
As dooth the streem, that turneth nevere agayn,
Descendynge fro the montaigne into playn.

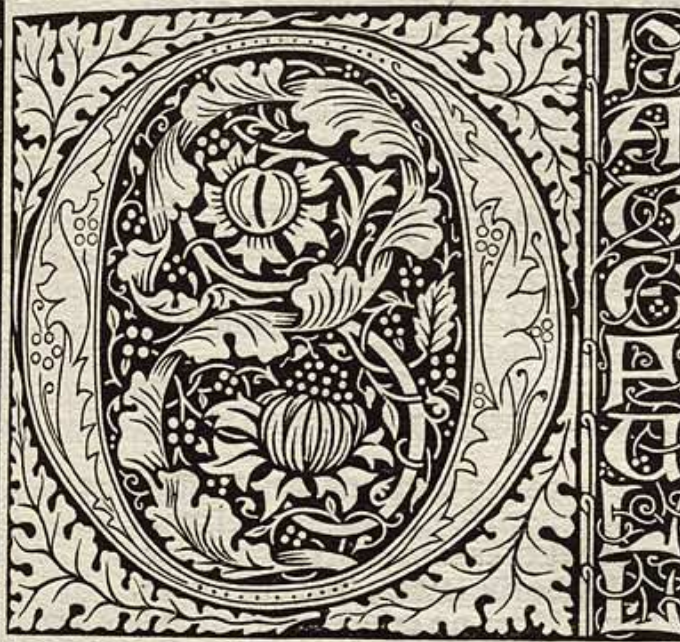
EL kan Senec, and many a philosopre,
Biwaillen tyme moore than gold in cofre;
For losse of catel may recovered be,
But losse of tyme shendeth us, quod he,
It wol nat come agayn, withouten drede,
Namore than wole Malkyns maydenhede,
Whan she hath lost it in hir wantownesse;
Lat us nat mowlen thus in ydelnesse.

Sire Man of Lawe, quod he, so have ye blis,
Telle us a tale anon, as forward is;
Ye been submytted thurgh youre free assent
To stonde in this cas at my juggement.
Acquiteth yow and holdeth youre biheeste,
Thanne have ye doon youre devoir atte leeste.
Hooste, quod he, depardieux ich assente.
To breke forward is nat myn entente.
Biheeste is dette, and I wole holde fayn
At my biheeste; I kan no better sayn:
For swich lawe as man yeveth another wight

he sholde hymselfen usen it by right;
Thus wole oure text; but nathelees certeyn,
I kan right now no thrifty tale seyn,
But Chaucer, though he kan but lewedly
On metres and on ryming craftily,
Hath seyde hem in swich Englyssh as he kan
Of olde tyme, as knoweth many a man;
And if he have noght seyde hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath seyde hem in another.
For he hath toold of loveres up and doun
Mo than Ovide made of mencion
In his Epistles, that been ful olde.
What sholde I tellen hem, syn they ben tolde?
In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcione,
And sitthe hath he spoken of everichone
Thise noble wyves and thise loveres eke.
Whoso that wole his large volume seke,
Clepeth the Seintes Legende of Cupide,
Ther may he seen the large woundes wyde
Of Luesse, and of Babilan Tesbee;
The swerd of Dido for the false Enee;
The tree of Phillis for hire Demophon;
The pleinte of Dianire and Hermyon;
Of Adriane and of Isiphilee;
The bareyne yle stondynge in the see;
The dreynte Leandre for his Erro;
The teiris of Eleyne, and eek the wo
Of Brixseyde, and of thee, Ladomea;
The crueltee of thee, queene Medea,
Thy litel children hangynge by the hals
for thy Jason that was in love so fals!
O Ypermystre, Penelopee, Alceste,
Your wifhede he comendeth with the beste!

BAT certeinly no word ne writeth he
Of thilke wikke ensample of Canacee,
That loved hir owene brother synfully;
Of swiche cursed stories I sey fy!
Or ellis of Tyro Appollonius,
How that the cursed kyng Antiochus
Brafte his doghter of hir maydenhede,
That is so horrible a tale for to rede,
Whan he hir threw upon the pavement;
And therfore he, of ful avysement,
Nolde nevere write in none of his sermons
Of swiche unkynde abhominacions,
Ne I wol noon rehere, if that I may.
But of my tale how shall I doon this day?
Me were looth be likned, doutelees,
To Muses that men clepe Pierides,
Methamorphoseos woot what I mene:
But nathelees, I recche noght a bene
Though I come after hym, with hawebake;
I speke in prose, and lat him rymes make.
And with that word, he with a sobre cheere
Bigan his tale, as ye shal after heere.

THE PROLOGE OF THE TALE OF THE MANNE OF LAWY



HARM! CONDICION OF POVERTE!
With thurst, with coold, with hunger so con-
foundid!
To asken help thee shameth in thyn herte;
If thou noon aske, so soore artow ywoundid,
That verray nede unwrappeth al thy wounde
hid!
Maugree thyn heed, thou most for indigence
Or stele, or begge, or borwe thy despence!

Thow blamest Crist, and seist ful bitterly,
He mysdeparteth richesse temporal;
Thy neighebores thou wytest synfully,
And seist thou hast to lite, and he hath al.
Darfay, seistow, somtyme he rekene shal,
Whan that his tayl shal brennen in the gleede,
for he noght helpeth needfulle in hir neede.

Herkne what is the sentence of the wise:
Bet is to dyen than have indigence;
Thyselve neighebor wol thee despise;
If thou be povre, farwel thy reverence!
Yet of the wise man take this sentence:
Alle the dayes of povre men been wikke;
Be war therfore, er thou come to that prikke!

If thou be povre, thy brother hateth thee,
And alle thy freendes fleen from thee, alas!
O riche marchaunts, ful of wele been yee,
O noble, o prudent folk, as in this cas!
Your bagges been nat filld with ambes as,
But with slys cynk, that renneth for youre
chaunce;
At Christemasse myrie may ye daunce!

Ye seken lond and see for yowre wynnynges;
As wise folk ye knowen al thestat
Of regnes; ye been fadres of tidynges

And tales, bothe of pees and of debaat.
I were right now of tales desolaat,
Nere that a marchant, goon is many a yeere,
Me taughte a tale, which that ye shal heere.

Heere bigynneth the Man of Lawe his Tale.
Pars prima.

In Surrye whilom dwelte a com-
paignye
Of chapmen riche, and therto
sadde and trewe,
That wydewhere senten hir
spicerye,
Clothes of gold, and satyns
riche of hewe.
Hir chaffare was so thrifty and
so newe,
That every wight hath deyntee
to chaffare
With hem, and eek to sellen
hem hire ware.

Now fil it that the maistres of
that sort
han shapen hem to Rome for
to wende;
Were it for chapmanhode, or
for disport,
Noon oother message wolde they thider sende,
But comen hemself to Rome, this is the ende;
And in swich place, as thoughte hem advantage
for hire entente, they take hir herbergage.

Sojourned han thise marchants in that toun
A certein tyme, as fil to hire plesance;
And so bifel that the excellent renoun
Of the Emperoures doghter, dame Custance,
Reported was, with every circumstance,
Unto thise Surryen marchants in swich wyse,
fro day to day, as I shal yow devyse.

This was the commune voys of every man:
Oure Emperour of Rome, God hym see!
A doghter hath that syn the world bigan,
To rekene as wel hir goodness as beautee,
Nas nevere swich another as is shee.
I prey to God, in honour hire sustene,
And wolde she were of al Europe the queene!

In hire is heigh beautee, withoute pride,
Yowthe, withoute grenehede or folye;
To alle hire werkes vertu is hir gyde;
Humbleste hath slayn in hire al tirannye;
She is mirour of alle curteisye;
Hir herte is verray chambre of hoolynesse,
Hir hand, ministre of fredam for almesse.

And al this voys was sooth, as God is trewe;
But now to purpos lat us turne agayn;
Thise marchants han doon fraught hir shippes
newe,
And, whan they han this blisful mayden sayn,
Hoom to Surrye been they went ful fayn,

And doon hir nedes as they han doon yore,
And lyven in wele; I kan sey yow na moore.

Now fil it, that thise marchants stode in grace
Of hym that was the sowdan of Surrye;
for whan they cam from any strange place
He wolde, of his benigne curteisye,
Make hem good chiere, and bisily espie
Tidynge of sondry regnes, for to leere
The wondres that they myghte seen or heere.

Amonges othere thynges, specially,
Thise marchants han hym toold of dame Custance,
So greet noblesse in earnest, ceriously,
That this sowdan hath caught so greet plesance
To han hir figure in his remembrance,
That al his lust, and al his busy cure,
Was for to love hire while his lyf may dure.

Paraventure in thilke large book,
Which that men clepe the bevene, ywriten was
With sterres, whan that he his birthe took,
That he for love sholde han his deeth, alas!
for in the sterres, clerer than is glas,
Is writen, God woot, whoso koude it rede,
The deeth of every man, withouten drede.

In sterres, many a wynter therbiforn,
Was writen the deeth of Ector, Achilles,
Of Pompei, Julius, er they were born;
The strif of Thebes; and of Eracles,
Of Sampson, Turnus; and of Socrates
The deeth; but mennes wittes ben so dulle,
That no wight kan wel rede it atte fulle.

His sowdan for his privee conseil sente,
And, shortly of this matiere for to pace,
He hath to hem declared his entente,
And seyde hem, certein, But he myghte have grace
To han Custance withinne a litel space,
He nas but deed; and charged hem in hye
To shapen for his lyf som remedye.

Diverse men diverse thynges seyden,
They argumenten, casten up and down;
Many a subtil resoun forth they leyden;
They speken of magyk and abusoun;
But finally, as in conclusioun,
They kan nat seen in that noon advantage,
Ne in noon oother wey, save mariage.

Thanne sawe they therinne swich difficultee,
By wey of reson, for to speke al playn,
Bycause that ther was swich diversitee
Bitwene hir bothe lawes, that they sayn,
They trowe That no cristene prince wolde fayn
Wedden his child under oure lawes sweete,
That us were taught by Mahoun, oure prophete.

And he answerde, Rather than I lese
Custance, I wol be cristned, doutelees;
I moot been hires, I may noon oother chese.
I prey yow hoold youre arguments in pees;
Saveth my lyf, and beth noght recchelees

To geten hire that hath my lyf in cure;
for in this wo I may nat longe endure.

What nedeth gretter dilatacioun?
I seye, by tretys and embassadrie,
And by the popes mediacioun,
And al the chirche, and al the chivalrie,
That in destruccioun of Maumetrie,
And in encrees of Cristes lawe deere,
They been acorded, so as ye shal heere,

Now that the sowdan and his baronage
And alle his liges, sholde yristned be,
And he shal han Custance in mariage,
And certein gold, I noot what quantitee,
And heerto founden sufficient suretee;
This same accord was sworn on eyther syde;
Now, faire Custance, almyghty God thee gyde!

Now wolde som men waiten, as I gesse,
That I sholde tellen al the purviante
That themperour, of his grete noblesse,
Hath shapen for his doghter, dame Custance.
Wel may men knowen that so greet ordinance
May no man tellen in a litel clause,
As was arrayed for so heigh a cause.

Bisshopes been shapen with hire for to wende,
Lords, ladies, knyghtes of renoun,
And oother folk ynogh, this is the ende;
And notified is thurghout the toun
That every wight, with greet devocioun,
Sholde preyn Crist, that he this mariage
Receyve in gree, and spede this viage.

The day is comen of hir departyng,
I seye, the woful day fatal is come,
That ther may be no lenger taryng,
But forthward they hem dresen, alle and some.
Custance, that was with sorwe al overcome,
ful pale arist, and dreseth hire to wende;
for wel she seeth ther is noon oother ende.

Alas! what wonder is it thogh she wepte,
That shal be sent to strange nacioun,
fro freendes that so tendrely hire kepte,
And to be bounden under subjeccioun
Of oon, she knoweth nat his condicioun.
Housbondes been alle goode, and han ben yore;
That knowen wyves, I dar say yow na moore.

Fader, she seyde, thy wrecched child, Custance,
Thy yonge doghter, fostred up so softe,
And ye, my mooder, my soverayn plesance,
Over alle thyng, outtaken Crist on lofte,
Custance, youre child, hire recomandeth ofte
Unto your grace; for I shal to Surrye,
Ne shal I nevere seen yow moore with eye.

Alas! unto the barbre nacioun
I moste goon, syn that it is youre wille;
But Crist, that starf for our savacioun,
So yewe me grace his heestes to fulfillle;
I, wrecche womman, no fors thogh I spille!

Wommen are born to thraldom and penance,
And to been under mannes governance.

I trowe at Troye, whan Pirrus brak the wal,
Or Ilion brende, at Thebes the citee,
Nat Rome, for the harm thurgh Hanybal,
That Romayns hath venquysshed tymes thre,
Nas herd swich tendre wepyng for pitee,
As in the chambre was for hire departyng;
But forth she moot, wherso she wepe or synge.

O firste moeyng, cruel firmament,
With thy diurnal sweigh that crowdest ay,
And hurlest al from Est til Occident,
That naturelly wolde holde another way;
Thy crowdyng set the bevene in swich array
At the bigynnyng of this fiers viage,
That cruel Mars hath slayn this mariage.

Infortunat ascendent tortuous,
Of which the lord is helpeles falle, alas,
Out of his angle into the derkeste hous.
O Mars, O Atazir, as in this cas!
O fiele Moone, unhappy been thy paas!
Thou knytest thee ther thou art nat receyved,
Ther thou were weel, fro thennes artow weyved.

Imprudent emperour of Rome, alas!
Was ther no philosophre in al thy toun?
Is no tyme bet than oother in swich cas?
Of viage is ther noon eleccioun,
Namely to folk of heigh condicioun,
Noght whan a roote is of a burthe yknowe?
Alas! we been to lewed or to slowe!

O ship is come this woful faire mayde,
Solempnely, with every circumstance.
Now Jhesu Crist be with yow alle, she sayde.
Ther nys namoore but, farewell, faire Custance!
She peyneth hire to make good contenance;
And forth I lete hire saille in this manere,
And turne I wole agayn to my matere.

The mooder of the sowdan, wel of vices,
Espied hath hir sones pleyn entente,
How he wol lete his olde sacrifices;
And right anon she for hir conseil sente;
And they been come to knowe what she mente.
And whan assembled was this folk in feere,
She sette hire down and seyde as ye shal heere.

Lords, she seyde, ye knowen everichon,
How that my sone in point is for to lete
The hooly lawes of oure Alkaron,
Yeven by Goddes message Makomete;
But oon avow to grete God I hete,
The lyf shal rather out of my body sterte,
Than Makometes lawe out of myn herte!

What sholde us tyden of this newe lawe,
But thraldom to our bodies and penance?
And afterward in helle to be drawe,
for we reneyed Mahoun oure creance?
But, lordes, wol ye maken assurance

As I shal seyn, assentyng to my loore,
And I shal make us sauf for everemoore?

They sworn and assenten, every man
To lyve with hire and dye, and by hire stonde;
And everich, in the beste wise he kan,
To strengthen hire shal alle his frendes fonde;
And she hath this emprise ytake on honde,
Which ye shal heren that I shal devyse,
And to hem alle she spak right in this wyse.

We shul first feyne us cristendom to take,
Coud water shal nat greve us but a lite;
And I shal swiche a feeste and revel make,
That, as I trowe, I shal the sowdan quite;
for thogh his wyf be cristned never so white
She shal have nede to wasshe away the rede,
Thogh she a fontful water with hire lede!

O sowdanesse, roote of iniquitee!
Virago thou, Semyrame the secounde,
O serpent under femynnytee,
Lik to the serpent depe in helle ybounde.
O feyned womman, al that may confounde
Vertu and innocence, thurgh thy malice
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vice!

O Sathan, envious syn thilke day
That thou were chaced from oure heritage,
Wel knowestow to wommen the olde way!
Thou madest Eva brynge us in servage,
Thou wolt fordoon this cristen mariage.
Thyn instrument so, weylaway the while!
Makestow of wommen, whan thou wolt bigile.

This sowdanesse, whom I thus blame & warye,
Leet prively hire conseil goon hire way.
What sholde I in this tale lenger tarye?
She rydeth to the sowdan on a day,
And seyde hym that she wolde reneye hir lay,
And cristendom of preestes handes fonge,
Repentyng hire she hethen was so longe;

Bisechyng hym to doon hire that honour,
That she moste han the cristen folk to feeste;
To plesen hem, I wol do my labour.
The sowdan seith, I wol doon at youre heeste;
And knelyng, thanketh hire of that requeste;
So glad he was, he nyste what to seye;
She kiste hir sone, and hoom she gooth hir weye.

Explicit pars prima. Sequitur pars secunda.

RRYVED been this cristen
folk to londe,
In Surrye, with a greet
solempne route;
And hastifliche this sowdan
sente his sonde,
first to his mooder, and all
the regne aboute,
And seyde his wyf was
comen, oute of doute,
And preyde hire for to ryde agayne the queene,
The honour of his regne to susteine.

Greet was the prees, and riche was tharray
Of Surryens and Romyans met yfeere;
The mooder of the sowdan, riche and gay,
Receyveth hire with al so glad a cheere
As any mooder myghte hir doghter deere,
And to the nexte citee ther bisyde,
A softe paas solempnely they ryde.

Noght trowe I the triumpe of Julius,
Of which that Lucan maketh swich a boost,
Was roialler, ne moore curius,
Than was thassemble of this blisful hoost;
But this scorpioun, this wikked goost,
The sowdanesse, for all hire flatteryng,
Caste under this ful mortally to styng.

The sowdan comth hymself soone after this
So roially, that wonder is to telle,
And welcometh hire with alle joye and blis;
And thus in murthe and joye I lete hem dwelle;
The fruyt of this matiere is that I telle.
Whan tyme cam men thoughte it for the beste,
The revel stynte, and men goon to hir reste.

The tyme cam, this olde sowdanesse
Ordeyned hath this feeste of which I tolde,
And to the feeste cristen folk hem dresse
In general, ye, bothe yonge and olde.
Heere may men feeste and roialtee biholde,
And deyntees mo than I kan yow devyse,
But all to deere they boghte it, er they ryse.

O sodeyn wol that evere art successor
To worldly blisse, spreind with bitterness;
Thende of the joy of oure worldly labour;
Wo occupieth the fyn of oure gladnesse.
Herke this conseil, for thy sikernes,
Upon thy glade day have in thy mynde
The unwar wo or harm that comth bihynde.

for soothly for to tellen at o word,
The sowdan and the cristen everichone
Been al tohewe and stiked at the bord,
But it were oonly dame Custance allone.
This olde sowdanesse, cursed krone,
Hath with hir frendes doon this cursed dede,
for she hirself wolde all the contree lede.

Ne ther was Surryen noon, that was converted,
That of the conseil of the sowdan woot,
That he nas al tohewe er he asterted,
And Custance han they take anon, foot/hoot
And in a ship all steereless, God woot,
They han hir set and biddeth hire lerne saille
Out of Surrye, agaynward to Ytaille.

A certain tresor that she with hire ladde,
And, sooth to seyn, vitaille greet plentee,
They han hire yeven, and clothes eek she hadde,
And forth she sailleth in the salte see.
O my Custance, ful of benignytee,
O emperoures yonge doghter deere,
He that is lord of fortune be thy steere!

She blesseth hire, and with ful pitous voys,
Unto the croys of Crist thus seyde she:
O cleere, O weleful auter, hooly croys,
Reed of the lambes blood, ful of pitee,
That wesshe the world fro the olde iniquitee,
Me fro the feend, and fro his clawes kepe,
That day that I shal drenchen in the depe.

Victorious tree, proteccioun of trewe,
That oonly worthy were for to bere
The kyng of hevene with his woundes newe,
The white lamb that hurt was with the spere,
Flemere of feendes out of hym and here,
On which thy lymes feithfully extenden,
Me helpe, and yif me myght my lyf tamenden.

ERES and dayes fleteth this creature
Thurghout the see of Grece unto the
Strayte
Of Marrok, as it was hire aventure.
On many a sory meel now may she bayte;
After hir deeth ful often may she wayte,
Er that the wilde waves wol hire dryve
Unto the place ther she shal arryve.

Men myghten asken why she was nat slayn
Eek at the feeste, who myghte hir body save?
And I answer to that demande agayn,
Who saved Danyel in the horrible cave,
Ther every wight save he, maister and knave,
Was with the leoun frete, er he asterte?
No wight but God, that he bar in his herte.

God liste to shewe his wonderful myracle
In hire, for we sholde seen his myghty werkis;
Crist, which that is to every harm triacle,
By certene meenes ofte, as knownen clerkis,
Dooth thyng for certein ende that ful derk is
To mannes wit, that for oure ignorance
Ne konne noght knowe his prudent purveiance.

Now gith she was nat at the feeste yslawe,
Who kepte hire fro the drenchyng in the see?
Who kepte Jonas in the fisses mawe,
Til he was spouted up at Nynyvee?
Wel may men knowe it was no wight but he
That kepte peple Ebrayk from hir drenchyng,
With drye feet thurghout the see passyng.

Who bad the foure spirites of tempest,
That power han tanoyen lond and see,
Bothe north and south, and also west and est,
Anoyeth neither see, ne land, ne tree?
Soothly the comandour of that was he
That fro the tempest ay this womman kepte
As wel whan that she wook as whan she slepte.

Where myghte this womman mete & drynke have
Thre yer and moore? How lasteth hire vitaille?
Who fedde the Egypciën Marie in the cave,
Or in desert? No wight but Crist, sans faille.
fyve thousand folk it was as greet mervaille
With loves fyve and fisses two to feede.
God sente his foyson at hir grete neede.

SHE dryveth forth into oure occian,
Thurghout oure wilde see, til atte laste
Under an hoold, that nempnen I ne kan,
fer in Northumberlond the wawe hire caste,
And in the sond hir ship stiked so faste,
That thennes wolde it noght of al a tyde,
The wyl of Crist was that she sholde abyde.

The constable of the castel down is fare
To seen this wrak, and al the ship he soghte,
And foond this wery womman, ful of care;
He foond also the tresor that she broghte.
In hir langage mercy she bisoghte,
The lyf out of hire body for to twynne,
Hire to delivere of wo that she was inne.

A maner Latyn corrupt was hir speche,
But algates therby was she understonde;
The constable, whan hym lyst no lenger seche,
This woful womman broghte he to the londe;
She kneleth down, and thanketh Goddes sonde;
But what she was, she wolde no man seye,
for foul ne fair, thogh that she sholde deye.

She seyde she was so mazed in the see
That she forgat hir mynde, by hir trouthe.
The constable hath of hire so greet pitee,
And eek his wyf, that they wepen for routhe.
She was so diligent, withouten slouth,
To serve and plesen everich in that place,
That alle hir loven that looken in hir face.

This constable and dame Hermengyld, his wyf,
Were payens, and that contree everywhere;
But Hermengyld loved hire right as hir lyf,
And Custance hath so longe sojourned there,
In orisons, with many a bitter teere,
Til Jhesu hath converted, thurgh his grace,
Dame Hermengyld, constablesse of that place.

In al that lond no cristen dorste route,
Alle cristen folk been fled fro that contree
Thurgh payens, that conquereden al aboute
The plages of the North, by land and see.
To Walys fledde the cristyanytee
Of olde Britons, dwellyng in this ile;
Ther was hir refut for the meene while.

But yet nere cristene Britons so exiled
That ther nere somme, that in hir privetee
Honoured Crist, and hethen folk bigiled;
And ny the castel swiche ther dwelten thre.
That oon of hem was blynd and myghte nat see
But it were with thilke eyen of his mynde,
With whiche men seen, after that they ben blynde.

Bright was the sonne as in that someres day,
for which the constable and his wyf also
And Custance, han ytake the righte way
Toward the see, a furlong wey or two,
To pleyen and to romen to and fro;
And in hir walk this blynde man they mette,
Croked and oold, with eyen feste yshette.

In name of Crist, criede this olde Britoun,
Dame Hermengyld, yif me my sighte agayn!
This lady weex affrayed of the soun,
Lest that hir housbonde, shortly for to sayn,
Wolde hire for Jhesu Cristes love han slayn;
Til Custance made hire boold, and bad hire wirche
The wyl of Crist, as doghter of his chirche.

The constable weex abashed of that sight,
And seyde, What amounteth al this fare?
Custance answerde, Sire, it is Cristes myght,
That helpeth folk out of the feendes snare.
And so ferforth she gan oure lay declare,
That she the constable, er that it were eve,
Converteth, and on Crist maketh hym believe.

This constable was nothyng lord of this place
Of which I speke, ther he Custance fond,
But kepeth it strongly, many wyntres space,
Under Alla, kyng of al Northhumbrelond,
That was ful wys, and worthy of his hond
Agayn the Scottes, as men may wel heere;
But turne I wole agayn to my mateere.

SUCHAN, that evere us waiteth to bigile,
Saugh of Custance al hire perfeccioun,
And caste anon how he myghte quite hir
while,
And made a yong knyght, that dwelte in that toun,
Love hire so hoot, of foul affeccioun,
That verrailly hym thoughte he sholde spille
But he of hire myghte ones have his wille.

He wowed hire, but it availleth noght,
She wolde do no synne, by no weye;
And for despit, he compassed in his thoght
To maken hire on shameful deeth to deye.
He wayteth whan the constable was aweye
And pryvely, upon a nyght he crepte
In Hermengyldes chambre whil she slepte.

Wery, forwaked in hire orisouns,
Slepeth Custance, and Hermengyld also.
This knyght, thurgh Sathanas temptaciouns,
All softely is to the bed ygo,
And hitte the throte of Hermengyld atwo,
And leyde the bloody knyf by dame Custance,
And wente his wey, ther God yeve hym meschance!

Soone after com' th this constable boom agayn,
And eek Alla, that kyng was of that lond,
And saugh his wyf despitously yslayn,
For which ful ofte he weeped and wroong his hond,
And in the bed the bloody knyf he fond
By dame Custance; alas! what myghte she seye?
For verray wo hir wit was al aweye.

To kyng Alla was toold al this meschance
And eek the tyme, and where, and in what wise
That in a ship was founden dame Custance,
As heerbiforn that ye han herd devyse.
The kynges herte of pitee gan agryse,
Whan he saugh so benigne a creature
Falle in disese, and in mysaventure:

for as the lomb toward his deeth is broght,
So stant this innocent biforn the kyng;
This false knyght that hath this tresoun wrought,
Berth hire on hond that she hath doon thys thyng;
But nathelees, ther was greet moornyng
Among the peple, and seyn, They kan nat gesse
That she had doon so greet a wikkednesse:

for they han seyn hire evere so vertuous,
And lovyng Hermengyld right as hir lyf.
Of this baar witness everich in that hous,
Save he that Hermengyld slow with his knyf.
This gentil kyng hath caught a greet motyf
Of this witness, and thoughte he wolde enquire
Depper in this, a trouthe for to lere.

Alas! Custance, thou hast no champioun,
Ne fighte kanstow noght, so weylaway!
But he that starf for our redempcioun,
And boond Sathan, and yet lith ther he lay,
So be thy stronge champion this day;
for, but if Crist open myracle kithe,
Withouthen gilt thou shalt be slayn as swithe.

She sit hire down on knees and thus she sayde:
Immortal God that savedest Susanne
fro false blame, and thou, merciful mayde,
Mary I meene, doghter to Seint Anne,
Bifore whos child angeles synge Osanne,
If I be gilty of this felonye
My socour be, or elles shal I dye!

Have ye nat seyn som tyme a pale face
Among a prees, of hym that hath be lad
Toward his deeth, wheras hym gat no grace,
And swich a colour in his face hath had,
Men myghte knowe his face, that was bistad,
Amonges alle the faces in that route?
So stant Custance, and looketh hire aboute.

QUEENES, lyvyng in prosperitee,
Duchesses, and ye ladyes everichone,
Haveth som routhe on hire adversitee;
An emperoures doghter stant allone.
She hath no wight to whom to make hir mone.
O blood roial, that stondest in this drede,
fer been thy freendes at thy grete nede!

THIS Alla, kyng, hath swich compassioun,
As gentil herte is fulfild of pitee,
That from his eyen ran the water down.
Now hastily do fecche a book, quod he,
And if this knyght wol sweren how that she
This womman slow, yet wol we us avyse
Whom that we wole that shal been our justise.

A Briton book, written with Evaungiles
Was fet, and on this book he swoor anon
She gilty was, and in the meene whiles
An hand hym smoot upon the nekke/boon,
That down he filatones as a stoon,
And bothe his eyen broste out of his face
In sighte of every body in that place.

A voys was herd in general audience,
And seyde, Thou hast desclaundred, giltye,
The doghter of hooly chirche in heigh presence;
Thou hastou doon, and yet holde I my pees.
Of this mervaille agast was al the prees;
As mazed folk they stoden everichone,
for drede of wreche, save Custance allone.

Greet was the drede, and eek the repentance,
Of hem that hadden wronge suspicioun
Upon this sely, innocent Custance;
And for this miracle, in conclusioun,
And by Custances mediacioun,
The kyng, and many another in that place,
Converted was, thanked be Cristes grace!

This false knyght was slayn for his untrouthe
By juggement of Alla, hastily;
And yet Custance hadde of his deeth greet routhe;
And after this Jhesus, of his mercy,
Made Alla wedden, ful solemnely,
This hooly mayden, that is so bright and sheene;
And thus hath Crist ymaad Custance a queene.

BUT who was woful, if I shal nat lye,
Of this wedding but Donegild, and na mo,
The kynges mooder, ful of tyrannye?
Hir thoughte hir cursed herte brast atwo;
She wolde noght hir sone had do so.
Hir thoughte a despit that he sholde take
So strange a creature unto his make.

NE list nat of the chaf, nor of the stree
Maken so long a tale as of the corn.
What sholde I tellen of the roialtee
At marriage, or which cours goth biforn,
Who bloweth in a trumpe, or in an horn?
The fryt of every tale is for to seye,
They ete, and drynke, and daunce, and synge, and
pleye.

They goon to bedde, as it was skile and right,
for thogh that wyves be ful hooly thynges,
They moste take in pacience at nyght
Swiche manere necessities as been plesynges
To folk that han ywedded hem with rynges,
And leve a lite hir hoolynesse aside,
As for the tyme; it may no bet bitide.

On hire he gat a knave/childe anon,
And to a biishop, and his constable eke,
He took his wyf to kepe, whan he is gon
To Scotlondward, his foomen for to seke.
Now faire Custance, that is so humble and meke,
So longe is goon with childe, til that stille
She halt hire chambre, abyding Cristes wille.

The tyme is come a knave/childe she beer,
Mauricius at the fontstoon they hym calle.
This constable dooth forth come a messenger,
And wroot unto his kyng, that cleped was Alle,
How that this blisful tidying is bifalle,
And othere tidyinges spedeful for to seye.
He taketh the lettre, and forth he gooth his weye.

THIS messenger, to doon his advantage,
Unto the kynges mooder rideth swithe,
And salueth hire ful faire in his langage:
Madame, quod he, ye may be glad and blithe,
And thanketh God an hundred thousand sithe,
My lady queene hath child, withouten doute,
To joye and blisse of al this regne aboute.

Lo, heere the lettres seled of this thyng,
That I moot bere with al the haste I may;
If ye wol aught unto youre sone the kyng,
I am youre servant, bothe nyght and day.
Donegild answerde, As now, at this tyme, nay;
But heere al nyght I wol thou take thy reste,
Tomorwe wol I seye thee what me leste.

THIS messenger drank sadly ale and wyn,
And stolen were his lettres pryvely,
Out of his box, whil he sleep as a swyn;
And countrefeted was ful subtilly
Another lettre, wrought ful synfully,
Unto the kyng direct of this mateere
fro his constable, as ye shal after heere.

The lettre spak, The queene delivered was
Of so horrible a feendly creature,
That in the castel noon so hardy was
That any while dorste ther endure.
The mooder was an elf, by aventure
Ycoven, by charmes or by sorcerie,
And everich wight hateth hir compaignye.

Wo was this kyng whan he this lettre had seyn,
But to no wight he tolde his sorwes soore,
But of his owene hand he wroot agayn,
Welcome the sonde of Crist for evermoore
To me, that am now lerned in his loore;
Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy plesaunce
My lust I putte al in thyn ordinaunce.

Kepeth this child, al be it foul or feir,
And eek my wyf unto myn boomecomynge;
Crist, whan hym list, may sende me an heir
Moore agreable than this to my likynge.
This lettre he seleft, pryvely wepyng,
Which to the messenger was take soone,
And forth he gooth; ther is na moore to doone.

MESSAGER, fulfild of dronkenesse!
Strong is thy breeth, thy lymes faltren ay,
And thou biwreyest alle secrenesse.
Thy mynde is lorn, thou janglest as a jay;
Thy face is turned in a newe array!
Ther dronkenesse regneth in any route,
Ther is no conseil hyd, withouten doute.

DONEGILD! I ne have noon Englissh
digne
Unto thy malice and thy tyrannye,
And therefore to the feend I thee resigne,
Lat hym enditen of thy traitorye!
fy, mannysh, fy! O nay, by God, I lye,
fy, feendlych spirit, for I dar wel telle,
Thogh thou heere walke, thy spirit is in helle!

THIS messenger comth fro the kyng agayn,
And at the kynges moodres court he lighte;
And she was of this messenger ful fayn,
And plesed hym, in al that ever she myghte.
He drank, and wel his girdel underpighte;
He slepeth, and he snoreth in his gyse
Al nyghte, until the sonne gan aryse.

Eft were his lettres stolen everychon,
And countrefeted lettres in this wyse:
The king comandeth his constable anon,
Up peyne of hangyng, and on heigh juyse,
That he ne sholde suffren, in no wyse,
Custance inwith his reawme for tabyde
Thre dayes and o quarter of a tyde;

But in the same ship as he hire fond,
Hire and hir yonge sone, and al hir geere
He sholde putte, and croude hire fro the lond,
And chargen hire she never eft coome there!
O my Custance, wel may thy goost have feere
And slepyng in thy dream been in penance,
Whan Donegild cast al this ordinance.

Thys messenger on morwe, whan he wook,
Unto the castel halt the nexte way,
And to the constable he the lettre took;
And whan that he this pitous lettre say,
ful ofte he seyde, Alas! and weylaway!
Lord Crist, quod he, how may this world endure?
So ful of synne is many a creature!

O myghty God, if that it be thy wille,
Sith thou art rightful juge, how may it be
That thou wolt suffren innocents to spille,
And wikked folk regne in prosperitee?
O goode Custance, alas! so wo is me,
That I moot be thy tormentour or deye
On shames deeth; ther is noon oother weye.

OPEN bothe yonge & olde in al that place,
Whan that the kyng this cursed lettre
sente,
And Custance, with a deedly pale face,
The ferthe day toward the ship she wente;
But natheless she taketh in good entente
The wyl of Crist, and knelynge on the stronde,
She seyde, Lord! ay welcome be thy sonde!

He that me kepte fro the false blame,
While I was on the lond amonges yow,
He kan me kepe from harm and eek fro shame
In salte see, although I se noght how.
As strong as evere he was, he is yet now.
In hym triste I, and in his mooder deere,
That is to me my seyl, and eek my steere.

Hir litel child lay wepyng in hir arm,
And knelynge, pitously to hym she seyde,
Dees, litel sone, I wol do thee noon harm.
With that hir kerchef of hir heed she breyde,
And over his litel eyen she it leyde,
And in hir arm she lullet it ful faste,
And into hevne hire eyen up she caste.

Mooder, quod she, and mayde bright, Marie,
Sooth is that thurgh wommanes eggement
Mankynde was lorn, and damned ay to dye,
for which thy child was on a croys yrent;
Thy blisful eyen sawe al his torment,
Thanne is ther no comparison bitwene
Thy wo and any wo man may sustene.

Thow sawe thy child yslayn bifore thyne eyen,
And yet now lyveth my litel child, parfay!
Now, lady bright, to whom alle woful cryen,
Thow glorie of wommanhede, thow faire may,
Thow haven of refut, brighte sterre of day,
Rewe on my child, that of thy gentillesse
Ruest on every reweful in distresse.

O litel child, alas! what is thy gilt,
That never wroghtest synne as yet, pardee?
Why wil thy hard fader han thee spilt?
O mercy, deere constable, quod she,
As lat my litel child dwelle heer with thee;
And if thou darst nat saven hym, for blame,
Yet kys hym ones in his fadres name!

THERWITH she looked bakward to the lond,
And seyde, farewel, housbonde routhelless!
And up she rist, & walketh doun the stronde
Toward the ship, hir folweth al the prees,
And evere she preyeth hire child to hold his pees;
And taketh hir leve, and with an hooly entente,
She blisshed hire and into ship she wente.

Vitailed was the ship, it is no drede,
Habundantly for hire, ful longe space;
And othere necessities that sholde nede
She hadde ynogh, heryed be Goddes grace!
for wynd and weder, almyghty God purchace!
And brynge hire boom, I kan no better seye;
But in the see she dryveth forth hir weye.

Explicit secunda pars. Sequitur pars tercia.

AL LA the kyng comth boom,
soon after this,
Unto his castel of the which
I tolde,
And asketh where his wyf
and his child is.
The constable gan aboute
his herte colde,
And pleyntly al the manere
he hym tolde,
As ye han herd, I kan telle it no better,
And sheweth the kyng his seele and eek his lettre;

And seyde, Lord, as ye comanded me,
Up peyne of deeth, so have I doon, certein.
This messenger tormented was til he
Moste biknowe, and tellen plat and pleynt,
fro nyght to nyght, in what place he had leyn;
And thus, by wit and subtil enquerynge,
Ymaged was by whom this harm gan sprynge.

The hand was knowe that the lettre wroot,
And al the venym of this cursed dede;

But in what wise, certeinly I noot.
Theffect is this, that Alla, out of drede,
his mooder slow, that may men pleyntly rede,
for that she traistoure was to hire ligeance.
Thus endeth olde Donegild with meschance.

The sorwe that this Alla nyght and day
Maketh for his wyf, and for his child also,
Ther is no tonge that it telle may;
But now wol I unto Custance go,
That fleteth in the see, in peyne and wo
fyve yer and moore, as liked Cristes sonde,
Er that hir ship approched unto londe.

UNDER an hethen castel, atte laste,
Of which the name in my text noght I
fynde,
Custance, and eek hir child, the see upcaste.
Almyghty God, that saved al mankynde,
Have on Custance and on hir child som mynde,
That fallen is in hethen hand eftsoone
In point to spille, as I shal telle yow soone.

Doun fro the castel comth ther many a wight,
To gauren on this ship, and on Custance;
But shortly, from the castel, on a nyght,
The lordes styward, God yewe him meschance!
A theef, that hadde reneyed oure creance,
Came into the ship alone, and seyde he sholde
hir lemman be, wherso she wolde or nolde.

Wo was this wrecched womman tho bigon;
hir childe cride, and she cride pitously;
But blisful Marie heelp hire right anon,
for with hir struglyng wel and myghtily,
The theef fil overbord al sodeynly,
And in the see he dreynte for vengeance;
And thus hath Crist unwemmed kept Custance!

FOULE lust of luxurie, lo, thyn ende!
Nat oonly that thou feynest mannes
mynde,
But verraily thou wolt his body shende.
Thende of thy werk, or of thy lustes blynde,
Is compleynyng: how many oon may men fynde
That noght for werk somtyme, but for thentente
To doon this synne, been outhere slayn or shente.

How may this wayke womman han this strengthe
Hire to defende agayn this renegat?
O Goliath, unmeasurable of lengthe,
how myghte David make thee so maat?
So yong and of armure so desolaat,
how dorste he looke upon thy dreadful face?
Wel may men seen, it nas but Goddes grace!

THO yaf Judith corage or hardynesse
To sleen hym, Olofernes, in his tente,
And to deliveren out of wrecchednesse
The peple of God? I seye for this entente,
That right as God spirit of vigour sente
To hem, and saved hem out of meschance,
So sente he myght and vigour to Custance.

NORTH gooth hir ship thurghout the narwe
mouth
Of Jubaltare and Septe, dryvynge ay,
Sometyme West and somtyme North and South,
And somtyme Est, ful many a wery day,
Til Cristes mooder, blessed be she ay!
Hath shapen, thurgh hir endeles goodnesse,
To make an ende of al hir hevynesse.

NOW lat us stynte of Custance but a throwe,
And speke we of the Romayn emperour,
That out of Surrye hath by lettres knowe
The slaughtre of cristen folk, and dishonour
Doon to his doghter by a fals traytour,
I mene the cursed wikked sowdanesse,
That at the feeste leet sleen both moore and lesse;

for which this emperour hath sent anon
his senatour with roial ordinance,
And othere lordes, God woot, many oon,
On Surryens to taken heigh vengeance.
They brennen, sleen, & brynge hem to meschance
ful many a day; but, shortly, this is thende,
homward to Rome they shapen hem to wende.

This senatour repaireth with victorie
To Romeward, saillynge ful roially,
And mette the ship dryvynge, as seith the storie,
In which Custance sit ful pitously.
Nothyng ne knew he what she was, ne why
She was in swich array; ne she nyl seye
Of hire estaat, although she sholde deye.

He bryngeth hire to Rome, and to his wyf
He yaf hire, and hir yonge sone also;
And with the senatour she ladde hir lyf.
Thus kan oure lady bryngen out of wo
Woful Custance, and many another mo.
And longe tyme dwelled she in that place
In hooly werkes evere, as was hir grace.

The senatoures wyf hir aunte was,
But for al that she knew hire never the moore:
I wol no lenger tarien in this cas,
But to kyng Alla, which I spake of yore,
That wepeth for his wyf and siketh soore,
I wol retourne, and lete I wol Custance
Under the senatoures governance.

KYNG ALLA, which that hadde his mooder
slayn,
Upon a day fil in swich repentance,
That, if I shortly tellen shal and playn,
To Rome he comth, to receyven his penance,
And putte hym in the popes ordinance,
In heigh and logh; and Jhesu Crist bisoghte
foryeve his wikked werkes that he wroghte.

The fame anon thurghout the toun is born,
How Alla kyng shal come on pilgrymage,
By herbergeours that wenten hym biforn;
for which the senatour, as was usage,
Rood hym agayns, and many of his lynage,

**The Man
of Lawe
his Tale**

As wel to shewen his heighe magnificence,
As to doon any kyng a reverence.

Greet cheere dooth this noble senatour
To kyng Alla, and he to hym also;
Everich of hem dooth oother greet honour;
And so bifel, that in a day or two,
This senatour is to kyng Alla go
To feste, and shortly, if I shal nat lye,
Custances sone wente in his compaignye.

Som men wolde seyn, at requeste of Custance,
This senatour hath lad this child to feeste;
I may nat tellen every circumstance,
Be as be may, ther was he at the leeste;
But sooth is this, that at his moodres heeste,
Biforn Alla, duryng the metes space,
The child stood, lookyng in the kynges face.

This Alla kyng hath of this child greet wonder,
And to the senatour he seyde anon,
Whos is that faire child that stondeth yonder?
I noot, quod he, by God and by Seint John!
A mooder he hath, but fader hath he noon
That I of woot, but shortly, in a stounde
He tolde Alla how that this child was founde.

But God woot, quod this senatour also,
So vertuous a lyvere in my lyf
Ne saugh I nevere as she, ne herd of mo
Of worldly wommen, mayde ne of wyf;
I dar wel seyn hir hadde levere a knyf
Thurghout hir brest, than ben a womman wikke;
There is no man koude bryng hire to that prikke.

NOW was this child as lyke unto Custance
As possible is a creature to be.
This Alla hath the face in remembrance
Of dame Custance, and thereon mused he,
If that the childes mooder were aught she
That is his wyf, and pryvely he sighte,
And spedde hym fro the table that he myghte.

Parfay! thoughte he, fantome is in myn heed!
I oghte deme of skilful juggement,
That in the salte see my wyf is deed;
And afterward he made his argument,
What woot I, if that Crist have hyder ysent
My wyf by see, as wel as he hire sente
To my contree fro thennes that she wente?

And after noon, hoom with the senatour
Goth Alla, for to seen this wonder chaunce.
This senatour dooth Alla greet honour,
And hastily he sente after Custance;
But trusteth wel, hire liste nat to daunce,
Whan that she wiste wherfore was that sonde;
Unnethe upon hir feet she myghte stonde.

WHAN Alla saugh his wyf, faire he hire
grette,
And weep, that it was routhe for to see;
for at the firste look he on hire sette,

He knew wel verraily that it was she;
And she for sorwe as dounb stant as a tree;
So was hir herte shet in hir distresse
Whan she remembered his unkyndenesse.

Twyes she swowned in his owene sighte,
He weep, and hym excuseth pitously;
Now God, quod he, and all his halwes brighte,
So wisty on my soul as have mercy,
That of youre harm as gilteles am I,
As is Maurice my sone, so lyk your face;
Elles the feend me fecche out of this place!

Long was the sobbyng and the bitter peyne,
Er that hir woful hertes myghte cesse;
Greet was the pitee for to heere hem pleyne,
Thurgh whiche pleintes gan hir wo encresse,
I pray yow all my labour to relesse,
I may nat telle hir wo until tomorwe,
I am so wery for to speke of sorwe.

But finally, whan that the sothe is wist,
That Alla gilteles was of hir wo,
I trowe an hundred tymes been they kist,
And swich a blisse is ther bitwix hem two,
That, save the joye that lasteth evermo,
Ther is noon lyk, that any creature
Hath seyn, or shal, whil that the world may dure.

Tho preyde she hir housbonde mekely,
In relief of hir longe pitous pyne,
That he wolde preye hir fader specially,
That of his magestee he wolde enclyne
To vouchesauf som day with hym to dyne;
She preyde hym eek he wolde by no weye
Unto hir fader no word of hire seye.

Som men wold seyn how that the child Maurice
Dooth this message unto the emperour;
But, as I gesse, Alla was nat so nyce
To hym, that was of so sovereyn honour
As he that is of cristen folk the flour,
Sente any child, but it is bet to deeme
He wente hymself, and so it may well seeme.

This emperour hath graunted gentilly
To come to dyner, as he hym bisoughte;
And wel rede I, he looked bisily
Upon this child, and on his doghter thoughte.
Alla goth to his in, and, as him oghte,
Arrayed for this feste in every wise,
As ferforth as his konnyng may suffice.

The morwe cam, and Alla gan hym dresse,
And eek his wyf, this emperour to meete;
And forth they ryde in joye and in gladnesse;
And whan she saugh hir fader in the strete,
She lighte doun and falleth hym to feete;
Fader, quod she, youre yonge child, Custance,
Is now ful clene out of youre remembrance.

I am youre doghter Custance, quod she,
That whilom ye han sent unto Surrye.

It am I, fader, that in the salte see
Was put allone, and dampned for to dye.
Now, goode fader, mercy, I yow crye!
Sende me namore unto noon hethenesse,
But thonketh my lord heere of his kyndenesse.

Who kan the pitous joye tellen al
Bitwix hem thre, syn they been thus ymette?
But of my tale make an ende I shal;
The day goth faste, I wol no lenger lette.
This glade folk to dyner they hem sette;
In joye and blisse at mete I lete hem dwelle,
A thousand foold wel moore than I kan telle.

This child Maurice was sithen emperour
Maad by the pope and lyved cristenly.
To Cristes chirche he dide greet honour;
But I lete al his storie passen by;
Of Custance is my tale specially.
In the olde Romane geestes may men fynde
Maurices lyf; I bere it noght in mynde.

This kyng Alla, whan he his tyme say,
With his Custance, his hooly wyf so sweete,
To Engeland been they come the righte way,
Wheras they lyve in joye and in quiete;
But litel while it lasteth, I yow heete,
Joye of this world, for tyme wol nat abyde;
fro day to nyght it changeth as the tyde.

Who lyved ever in swich delit o day
That hym ne mooved outhur conscience,
Or ire, or talent, or som kynne affray,
Envye, or pride, or passion, or offence?
I ne seye but for this ende this sentence,
That litel while in joye or in plesance
Lasteth the blisse of Alla with Custance;

for deeth, that taketh of heigh and logh his
rente,
Whan passed was a yeer, evene as I gesse,
Out of this world this kyng Alla he hente,
for whom Custance hath ful greet hevynesse.
Now lat us praye to God his soule blesse!
And dame Custance, finally to seye,
Toward the toun of Rome goth hir weye.

To Rome is come this hooly creature,
And fyndeth ther hire freendes hoole and
sounde:

HEERE BIGYNNETH THE SHIPMANNES TALE.

MARCHANT whilom
dwelled at Seint Denys,
That riche was, for which
men helde hym wys;
A wyf he hadde of ex-
cellent beautee,
And compaignable and
revelous was she,
Which is a thyng that
causeth more dispence

Now is she scaped al hire aventure;
And whan that she hir fader bath yfounde,
Doun on hir knees falleth she to grounde;
Wepyng for tendrenesse in herte blithe,
She heriyeth God an hundred thousand sithe.

In vertu and in hooly almus/dede
They lyven alle, and nevere asonder wende;
Til deeth departed hem this lyf they lede.
And fareth now weel, my tale is at an ende.
Now Jhesu Crist, that of his myght may
sende
Joye after wo, governe us in his grace,
And kepe us alle that been in this place!
Amen.

Here endeth the Tale of the Man of Lawe.

Next folwith the Shipman his prologe.

OURE hoste upon his stiropes
stode anon,
And seyde, Good men, herken-
eth, everichon;
This was a thrifty tale for the
nones!
Sir Parish Prest, quod he, for Goddes bones,
Telle us a tale, as was thy forward yore;
I se wel that ye lerned men in lore
Can moche good, by Goddes dignitee!
The Persone him answerde, Benedicite!
What eyleth the man, so sinfully to swere?
Oure hoste answerde, O Jankyn, be ye there?
I smelle a Loller in the wind, quod he.
How! good men, quod our hoste, herkneth me,
Abydeth, for Goddes digne passioun,
for we shal han a predicacioun;
This Loller here wol prechen us somwhat.
Nay, by my fader soule! that shal he nat!
Seyde the Shipman; here shal he nat preche;
He shal no gospel glosen here ne teche.
We leven alle in the grete God, quod he,
He wolde sowen som difficulte,
Or springen cokkel in our clene corn;
And therefore, hoste, I warne the biforn,
My joly body shal a tale telle,
And I shal clynken yow so mery a belle,
That I shal waken al this compaignye;
But it shal nat ben of philosophye,
Ne phislyas, ne termes queynte of lawe;
There is but litel Latin in my mawe.

Here endith the Shipman his prologe.

Than worth is al the chiere and reverence
That men hem doon at festes & at daunces;
Swiche salutaciouns and contenaunces
Passen as dooth a shadwe upon the wal.
But wo is hym that payen moot for al;
The sely housbonde, algate he moste paye;
He moot us clothe, and he moot us arraye,
Al for his owene worship richely,
In which array we daunce jolily.
And if that he noght may, paraventure,

Or elles list no swich dispence endure,
But thynketh it is wasted and ylost,
Thanne moot another payen for cure cost,
Or lene us gold, and that is perilous.

HIS noble marchaunt heeld a worthy hous,
For which he hadde alday so greet repair
For his largesse, and for his wyf was fair,
That wonder is; but herkneth to my tale.

AMONGES alle his gastes, grete and smale
Ther was a monk, a fair man and a boold,
I trowe of thritty wynter he was cöld,
That evere in oon was comyng to that place.
This yonge monk, that was so fair of face,
Aqueynted was so with the goode man
Sith that hir firste knoweliche bigan,
That in his hous as famulier was he
As it possible is any freend to be.

And for as muchel as this goode man
And eek this monk, of which that I bigan,
Were bothe two yborn in o village,
The monk hym claymeth as for cosynage;
And he agayn, he seith nat ones nay,
But was as glad therof as fowel of day;
For to his herte it was a greet plesaunce.
Thus been they knyght with eterne alliaunce,
And ech of hem gan oother for tassure
Of brotherhede, whil that hir lyf may dure.

Free was Daun John, and namely of dispence,
As in that hous; and ful of diligence
To doon plesaunce, and also greet costage.
He noght forgat to yewe the leeste page
In al that hous, but after hir degree.

He yaf the lord, and sitthe al his meynce,
Whan that he cam, som manere honest thyng,
For which they were as glad of his comyng
As fowel is fayn whan that the sonne upriseth;
Na moore of this as now, for it suffiseth.

But so bifel, this marchant on a day
Shoop hym to make redy his array
Toward the toun of Brugges for to fare,
To byen there a porcioun of ware;
For which he hath to Parys sent anon
A messenger, and preyed hath Daun John
That he sholde come to Seint Denys to pleye
With hym and with his wyf a day or tweye,
Er he to Brugges wente, in alle wise.

HIS noble monk, of which I yow devyse,
Hath of his abbot, as hym list, licence,
Bycause he was a man of heigh prudence,
And eek an officer, out for to ryde,
To seen hir graunges and hire bernys wyde;
And unto Seint Denys he comth anon.

Who was so welcome as my lord Daun John,
Oure deere cosyn, ful of curteisye?
With hym broghte he a jubbe of malvesye
And eek another, ful of fyn vernage,
And volatyl, as ay was his usage.
And thus I lete hem ete and drynke and pleye,
This marchant and this monk, a day or tweye.

THE thridde day, this marchant up ariseth,
And on his nedes sadly hym avyseth,
And up into his countour/hous gooth he,
To rekene with hymself, as wel may be,

Of thilke yeer, how that it with him stood,
And how that he despended hadde his good;
And if that he encessed were or noon,
His bookes and his bagges many oon
He leith biforn hym on his countyng-bord,
ful riche was his tresor and his hord,
for which ful faste his countour/dore he shette;
And eek he nolde that no man sholde hym lette
Of his accountes, for the meene tyme;
And thus he sit til it was passed pryme.

DAUN JOHN was ryzen in the morwe also,
And in the gardyn walketh to and fro,
And hath his thynges seyde ful curteisly.
This goode wyf cam walkinge pryvely
Into the gardyn, there he walketh softe,
And hym saweth, as she hath doon ofte.

And mayde child cam in hire compaignye,
Whiche as hir list she may governe and gye,
for yet under the yerde was the mayde.
O deere cosyn myn, Daun John, she sayde,
What eyleth yow, so rathe for to ryse?

Neece, quod he, it oghte nough suffise
fyve houres for to slepe upon a nyght,
But it were for an old appalled wight,
As been these wedded men, that lye and dare
As in a fourme sit a very hare,
Were al forstraught with houndes grete & smale.

But deere nece, why be ye so pale?
I trowe certes that oure goode man
Hath yow laboured sith the nyght bigan,
That yow were nede to resten hastily.

And with that word he lough ful muryly,
And of his owene thought he wex al reed.
This faire wyf gan for to shake hir heed,
And seyde thus: Ye, God woot al, quod she;

Nay, cosyn myn, it stant nat so with me,
for, by that God that yaf me soule and lyf,
In al the reawme of France is ther no wyf
That lasse lust hath to that sory pleye.
for I may synge Allas and weylawey
That I was born; but to no wight, quod she,
Dar I nat telle how that it stant with me.

Wherfore I thynke out of this land to wende,
Or elles of myself to make an ende,
So ful am I of drede and eek of care.

HIS monk bigan upon this wyf to stare,
And seyde, Allas, my nece, God forbede
That ye, for any sorwe or any drede,
fordo youreself; but tel me of youre grief;
Paraventure I may, in youre meschief,
Conseille or helpe; and therfore telleth me
Al youre anoy, for it shal been secree;

for on my porthors here I make an ooth
That nevere in my lyf, for lief ne looth,
Ne shal I of no conseil yow biwreye.
The same agayn to yow, quod she, I seye;
By God and by this porthors, I yow swere,
Though men me wolde al into pieces tere,
Ne shal I nevere, for to goon to helle,
Biwreye a word of thyng that ye me telle,
Nat for no cosynage ne alliaunce,
But verrailly for love and affiaunce.

Thus been they sworn, & heerupon they kiste.

And ech of hem tolde oother what hem liste.

Cosyn, quod she, if that I hadde a space,
As I have noon, and namely in this place,
Thanne wolde I telle a legende of my lyf,
What I have suffred sith I was a wyf
With myn housbonde, al be he youre cosyn.

Nay, quod this monk, by God & Seint Martyn!
He is na moore cosyn unto me
Than is this lief that hangeth on the tree.
I clepe hym so, by Seint Denys of fraunce!
To have the moore cause of aqueyntaunce
Of yow, which I have loved specially,
Hoven alle wommen sikerly;

This swere I yow on my professioun.
Tellethe youre grief lest that he come adoun,
And hasteth yow, and gooth youre wey anon.

Deere love, quod she, O my Daun John,
ful lief were me this conseil for to hyde,
But out it moot, I may namoore abyde.
Myn housbonde is to me the worst man
That ever was, sith that the world bigan.

But sith I am a wyf, it sit nat me
To tellen no wight of oure privetee,
Neither a bedde, ne in noon oother place;
God shilde I sholde it tellen, for his grace!

A wyf ne shal nat seyn of hir housbonde
But al honour, as I kan understonde;
Save unto yow, this muche I tellen shal;
As helpe me God, he is noght worth at al
In no degree the value of a flye;

But yet me greveth moost his nygardye.
And wel ye woot that women naturally
Desiren thynges sixe, as wel as I:

They wolde that hir housbondes sholde be
hardy and wise, and riche, and therto free,
And buxom to his wyf, and fressh abedde.
But, by that ilke Lord that for us bledde,
for his honour, myself for to arraye,
A Sondag next, I moste nedes paye

An hundred frankes, or ellis I am lorn;
Yet were me levere that I were unborn
Than me were doon a sclandre or vileynye;
And if myn housbonde eek it myghte espye,
I nere but lost, and therfore I yow preye,
lene me this somme, or ellis moot I deye.

Daun John, I seye, lene me thise hundred frankes;
Pardee, I wol nat faille yow my thanks,
If that yow list to doon that I yow praye;
for at a certeyn day I wol yow paye,
And doon to yow what plesance and servise
That I may doon, right as yow list devise.

And but I do, God take on me vengeance
As foul as evere hadde Genyloun of France!

HIS gentil monk answerde in this manere:
Now trewely, myn owene lady deere,

I have, quod he, on yow so greet a routhe,
That I yow swere, and plichte yow my trouthe,
That whan youre housbonde is to flaundres fare,
I wol delyvere yow out of this care;

for I wol brynge yow an hundred frankes.
And with that word he caught hire by the flanks,
And hire embraceth harde, and kiste hire ofte.

Gooth now youre wey, quod he, al stille & softe,

And lat us dyne as soone as that ye may;

for by my chilyndre it is pryme of day.
Gooth now, and beeth as trewe as I shal be.
Now, elles God forbede, sire, quod she;
And forth she gooth, as jolif as a pye,
And bad the cookes that they sholde hem hye,
So that men myghte dyne, and that anon.

Up to hir housbonde is this wyf ygon,
And knokketh at his countour boldely.
Who is ther? quod he, Peter! it am I,
Quod she; what, sire, how longe wol ye faste?

How longe tyme wol ye rekene and caste
Yoursommes, & youre bookes, & youre thynges?
The devel have part on alle swiche rekenynges!
Ye have ynough, pardee, of Goddes sonde;
Com down today, and lat youre bagges stonde.

Ne be ye nat ashamed that Daun John
Shal fasting al this day elenge goon?
What! lat us heere a messe, and go we dyne.
Yf, quod this man, litel kanstow devyne

The curious bisynesse that we have;
for of us chapmen, also God me save,
And by that lord that clepid is Seint Yve,
Scarsly amonges twelve, ten shul thryve
Continuently, lastyng unto oure age.

We may wel make chiere and good visage,
And dryve forth the world as it may be,
And kepen oure estaat in pryvetee
Til we be deed; or elles that we pleye
A pilgrymage, or goon out of the weye.

And therfore have I greet necessitee
Upon this queynte world tavyse me;
for everemoore we moote stonde in drede
Of hap and fortune in oure chapmanhede.

To flaundres wol I go to morwe at day,
And come agayn, as soone as evere I may,
for which, my deere wyf, I thee biseke
As be to every wight buxom and meke,
And for to kepe oure good be curious,
And honestly governe wel oure hous.

Thou hast ynough in every maner wise,
That to a thrifty household may suffise;
Thee lakketh noon array ne no vitaille,
Of silver in thy purs shaltow nat faille.

And with that word his countour/dore he shette,
And doun he gooth, no lenger wolde he lette;
But hastily a messe was ther seyde,
And spedily the tables were pleyd,
And to the dyner faste they hem spedde,
And richely this monk the chapman fedde.

After dyner Daun John sobriely
This chapman took apart, and prively
He seyde hym thus: Cosyn, it standeth so,
That wel I se to Brugges wol ye go.

God and Seint Austyn spede yow and gyde!
I prey yow, cosyn, wisely that ye ryde;
Govermeth yow also of youre dicte
Atemprely, and namely in this hete.

Bitwix us two nedeth no strange fare;
farewel cosyn, God shilde yow fro care.
If anythyng ther be by day or nyght,
If it lye in my power and my myght,
That ye me wol comande in any wyse,

**The
Ship-
mannes
Tale**

It shal be doon, right as ye wol devyse.
O thyng, er that ye goon, if it may be:
I wolde prey yow for to lene me
An hundred frankes, for a wyke or tweye,
for certein beestes that I moste beye,
To stoore with a place that is oures;
God helpe me so, I wolde that it were yowres.
I shal nat faille surely at my day,
Nat for a thousand frankes, a mile way,
But lat this thyng be secree, I yow preye,
for yet tonyght these beestes moot I beye,
And fare now wel, myn owene cosyn deere,
Graunt mercy of youre cost and of youre cheere!
This noble marchant gentilly anon
Answerde, and seyde, O cosyn myn, Daun John,
Now sikerly this is a smal requeste;
My gold is yowres, whan that it yow leste,
And nat oonly my gold, but my chaffare;
Take what yow list, God shilde that ye spare.
But o thyng is, ye knowe it wel ynogh,
Of chapmen, that hir monie is hir plogh;
We may creauce whil we have a name,
But goldlees for to be, it is no game;
Paye it agayn whan it lith in youre ese;
After my myght ful fayn wolde I yow plesse.
Thise hundred frankes he fette hym forth anon,
And prively he took hem to Daun John;
No wight in al this world wiste of this loone,
Savyng this marchant and Daun John alloone.
They drynke, and speke, & rome awhile, & pleye,
Til that Daun John rideth to his abbeye.
The morwe cam, and forth this marchant rideth
To flaundesward; his prentys wel hym gydeth,
Til he cam into Brugges murily.
Now gooth this marchant faste and bisily
Aboute his nede, and byeth and creauceth;
He neither pleyeth at the dees, ne daunceth;
But as a marchant, shortly for to telle,
He let his lyf, and there I lete hym dwelle.
The Sunday next this marchant was agon,
To Seint Denys ycomen is Daun John,
With crowne and berde all fressh and newe
yshave.
In al the hous ther nas so litel a knave,
Ne no wight elles, that he nas ful fayn
for that my lord Daun John was come agayn.
And shortly, to the point right for to gon,
This faire wyf accorded with Daun John
That for these hundred frankes he sholde alnyght
Have hire in his armes bolt upright,
And this acord parfourned was in dede.
In myrthe al nyght a bisy lyf they lede
Til it was day, that Daun John wente his way,
And bad the meynce, farewell, have good day!
for noon of hem, ne no wight in the toun,
hath of Daun John right no suspicioun.
And forth he rydeth hoom to his abbeye,
Or where hym list; namoore of hym I seye.
HIS marchant, whan that ended was the
faire,
To Seint Denys he gan for to repaire,
And with his wyf he maketh feeste and cheere,
And telleth hire that chaffare is so deere

That nedes moste he make a chevyssaunce;
for he was bounde in a reconyssaunce,
To paye twenty thousand sheeld anon;
for which this marchant is to Parys gon,
To borwe of certein freendes that he hadde
A certeyn frankes; and somme with him he ladde.
And whan that he was come into the toun,
for greet chiertee and greet affeccoun,
Unto Daun John he gooth hym first, to pleye;
Nat for to axe or borwe of him moneye,
But for to wite and seen of his welfare,
And for to tellen hym of his chaffare,
As freendes doon whan they been met yfeere.
Daun John hym maketh feeste & murye cheere,
And he hym tolde agayn, ful specially,
How he hadde wel ybought and graciously,
Thanked be God! al hool his marchandise;
Save that he moste, in alle maner wise,
Maken a chevyssaunce, as for his beste,
And thanne he sholde been in joye and reste.
Daun John answerde, Certes I am fayn,
That ye in heele ar comen hom agayn,
And if that I were riche, as have I blisse,
Of twenty thousand sheeld shold ye nat myse,
for ye so kyndely this oother day
Lente me gold; and as I kan and may
I thanke yow, by God and by Seint Jame!
But natheles I took unto oure dame,
Your wyf, at hom, the same gold agayn
Upon youre bench; she woot it wel, certeyn,
By certeyn tokenes that I kan yow telle.
Now, by youre leve, I may no lenger dwelle;
Oure abbot wole out of this toun anon,
And in his compaignye moot I goon.
Grete wel oure dame, myn owene nece sweete,
And farewell, deere cosyn, til we meete!
HIS marchant, which that was ful war & wys,
Creanced hath, and payd eek in Parys
To certeyn Lumbardes, redy in hir hond
The somme of gold, and hadde of hem his bond;
And hoom he gooth, murie as a papejay,
for wel he knew he stood in swich array
That nedes moste he wyne in that viage
A thousand frankes above al his costage.
His wyf ful redy mette hym atte gate,
As she was wont of oold usage algate,
And al that nyght in myrthe they bisette;
for he was riche and cleerly out of dette.
Whan it was day, this marchant gan embrace
his wyf al newe, and kiste hire on hir face,
And up he gooth and maketh it ful tough.
Namooore, quod she, by God, ye have ynough!
And wantowely agayn with him she pleyde;
Til atte laste, thus this marchant seyde:
By God, quod he, I am a litel wrooth
With yow, my wyf, although it be me looth.
And woot ye why? By God, as that I gesse,
That ye han maad a manere straungenesse
Bitwixen me and my cosyn Daun John;
Ye sholde han warned me, er I had gon,
That he yow hadde an hundred frankes payed
By redy tokene; and heeld hym yvele apayed,
for that I to hym spak of chevyssaunce;

Me semed so as by his contenance.
But natheles, by God, oure hevene kyng,
I thoughte nat to axen hym no thyng.
I prey thee, wyf, ne do namoore so;
Telle me alwey, er that I fro thee go,
If any dettour hath in myn absence
Ypayed thee; lest, thurgh thy negligence,
I myghte hym axe a thing that he hath payed.
HIS wyf was nat afered nor affrayed,
But boldely she seyde, and that anon:
Marie, I defie the false monk, Daun John!
I kepe nat of his tokenes never a deel,
He took me certeyn gold, that woot I weel.
What! yvel thedom on his monkes snowte!
for, God it woot, I wende, withouten doute,
That he hadde yvee it me bycause of yow,
To doon therewith myn honour and my prow,
for cosynage, and eek for beele cheere
That he hath had ful ofte tymes heere.
But sith I se I stonde in this disjoynit,
I wol answer yow shortly, to the poynt.
Ye han mo slakkere dettours than am I,
for I wol paye yow wel and redily
fro day to day; and if so be I faille,
I am youre wyf; score it upon my taille,
And I shal paye, as soon as ever I may;
for by my trouthe, I have on myn array,
And nat on wast, bistowed every deel.
And for I have bistowed it so weel
for youre honour, for Goddes sake, I seye,
As be nat wrooth, but lat us laughe and pleye.
Ye shal my joly body have to wedde;
By God! I wol nat paye yow but abedde.
forgyve it me, myn owene spouse deere;
Turne hiderward, and maketh bettre cheere!
This marchant saugh ther was no remedie,
And for to chide, it nere but greet folie,
Sith that the thyng may nat amended be.
Now, wyf, he seyde, and I foryeve it thee,
But by thy lyf, ne be namoore so large;
Keepe bet oure good, that yvee I thee in charge.
Thus endeth now my tale, and God us sende
Taillynge ynough unto oure lyves ende.
Amen. Heere endeth the Shipmannes Tale.

**Bihold the murie wordes of the Hoost to the
Shipman, and to the lady Prioressse.**
EL seyde! by corpus do-
minus, quod our Hooste;
Now longe moote thou
saille by the coste,
Sire gentil maister,
gentil maryneer!
God yvee this monk a
thousand last quade
yeer!
A ha! felawes, beth ware
of swiche a jape!
The monk putte in the mannes hood an ape,

**The
Prioresses
Tale**

And in his wyves eek, by Seint Hustyn!
Draweth no monkes moore unto youre in.
But now passe over, and lat us seke aboute,
Who shal now telle first, of al this route,
Another tale; and with that word he sayde,
As curteisly as it had ben a mayde,
My lady Prioressse, by youre leve,
So that I wiste I sholde yow nat greve,
I wolde demen that ye tellen sholde
A tale next, if so were that ye wolde.
Now wol ye vouchesauf, my lady deere?
Gladly, quod she, and seyde as ye shal heere.

The prologe of the Prioresses Tale.
Domine, dominus noster.

LORD, oure Lord, thyname
how merveillous
Is in this large worldysprad,
quod she;
for nocht oonly thy laude
precious
Parfourned is by men of
dignitee,
But by the mouth of chil-
dren thy bountee
Parfourned is; for on the best soukyng
Somtyme shewen they thyn herynge.

Wherfore in laude, as I best kan or may,
Of thee, and of the white lylle flour
Which that thee bar, and is a mayde alway,
To telle a storie I wol do my labour;
Nat that I may encreessen hir honour;
for she herself is honour, and the roote
Of bountee, next hir sone, and soules boote.

O mooder mayde! O mayde mooder fre!
O bussh unbrent, brennyng in Moyses sighte,
That ravysedest down fro the Deitee,
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the goost that in tha-
lighte;
Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,
Conceyved was the fadres sapience,
Helpe me to telle it in thy reverence!

Lady! thy bountee, thy magnificence,
Thy vertu, and thy grete humylitee
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science;
for somtyme, lady, er men praye to thee,
Thou goost biforn of thy benygnytee,
And getest us the lyght thurgh thy preyere,
To gyden us unto thy sone so deere.

My konnyng is so wayk, O blisful queene,
for to declare thy grete worthynesse,
That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,
But as a child of twelf monthe oold or leese,
That kan unnethes any word expresse,
Right so fare I, and therefore I yow preye,
Gyde my song that I shal of yow seye.

heere bigynneth the prioresses tale



was in hys, in a greet citee,
Amonges cristene folk, a Jewerie,
Sustened by a lord of that contree
for foule usure, and lucre of vileynye,
Hateful to Crist and to his compaignye;
And thurgh the strete men myghte ride or
wende,
for it was free, and open at eyther ende.

A litel scole of cristen folk ther stood
Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
Children an heepe, yemen of cristen blood,
That lerned in that scole yee by yere
Swich manere doctrine as men used there,
This is to seyn, to syngen and to rede,
As smale children doun in hire childhede.

Among these children was a wydwe
sone,
A litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone,
And eek also, whereas he saugh thymage
Of Cristes mooder, hadde he in usage,
As hym was taught, to knele adoun and seye
His Ave Marie, as he goth by the weye.

Thus hath this wydwe hir litel sone ytaught
Oure blisful lady, Cristes mooder deere,
To worshipec ay, and he forgate it naught,
for sely child wol alday soone leere;
But ay, whan I remembre on this mateere,
Seint Nicholas stant evere in my presence,
for he so yong to Crist dide reverence.

This litel child, his litel book lernynge,
As he sat in the scole at his prymer,

He Alma redemptoris herde synge,
As children lerned hire an thiphoner;
And, as he dorste, he drough hym ner and ner,
And herked ay the wordes and the noote,
Til he the firste vers koude al by rote.

Noght wiste he what this Latyn was to seye,
for he so yong and tendre was of age;
But on a day his felawe gan he preye
Texpounden hym this song in his langage,
Or telle him why this song was in usage;
This preye he hym to construe and declare
ful often time upon his knowes bare.

his felawe, which that elder was than he,
Answerde hym thus, This song I have herd seye,
Was makid of oure blisful lady free,
Hire to salve, and eek hire for to preye
To been oure help and socour whan we deye;
I kan na moore expounde in this mateere,
I lerne song, I kan but smal grammeere.

And is this song makid in reverence
Of Cristes mooder? seyde this innocent;
Now certes, I wol do my diligence
To konne it al, er Cristemasse is went;
Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,
And shal be beten thries in an houre,
I wol it konne, oure lady to honoure!

His felawe taughte hym homward prively
fro day to day, til he koude it by rote,
And thanne he song it wel and boldely
fro word to word, acordynge with the note;
Twies a day it passed thurgh his throte,
To scoleward and homward whan he wente;
On Cristes mooder set was his entente.

As I have seyd, thurghout the Jewerie
This litel child, as he cam to and fro,
ful muryly than wolde he synge and crie
O Alma redemptoris, everemo.
The swetesse hath his herte perced so
Of Cristes mooder, that, to hire to preye,
He kan nat stynte of synyng by the weye.

oure firste foo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Jewes herte his waspes nest,
Up swal, and seide, O Hebrayk peple, alas!
Is this to yow a thyng that is honest,
That swich a boy shal walken as hym lest
In youre despit, and synge of swich sentence,
Which is agayn youre lawes reverence?

fro thennes forth the Jewes han conspired
This innocent out of this world to chace;
An homicide therto han they hyred,
That in an aleye hadde a privee place;
And as the child gan forby for to pace,
This cursed Jew hym hente and heeld hym faste,
And kytte his throte, and in a pit hym caste.

I seye that in a wardrobe they hym threwe

Whereas thise Jewes purgen hire entraille.
CURSED folk of Herodes al newe!
What may youre yvel entente yow availle?
Mordre wol out, certeyn, it wol nat faille,
And namely, ther thonour of God shal sprede,
The blood out crieth on youre cursed dede.

O martir, sowded to virginitee,
Now maystow syngen, folwynge evere in oon
The white Lamb celestial, quod she,
Of which the grete Evaungelist, Seint John,
In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they that
goon
Biforn this Lamb, and synge a song al newe,
That nevere, fleschly, wommen they ne knewe.

His povre wydwe awaiteth al that nyght
After hir litel child, but he cam noght;
for which, as soone as it was dayes lyght,
With face pale of drede and bisy thocht,
She hath at scole and elleswhere hym soght;
Til finally she gan so fer espie
That he last seyn was in the Jewerie.

With moodres pitee in hir brest enclosed,
She gooth, as she were half out of hir mynde,
To every place where she hath supposed
By liklihedde hir litel child to fynde;
And evere on Cristes mooder meeke and kynde
She cride, and atte laste thus she wroghte,
Among the cursed Jewes she hym soghte.

She frayneth and she preyeth pitously
To every Jew that dwelte in thilke place,
To telle hire if hir child wente oght forby.
They seyde Nay, but Jhesu of his grace,
Yaf in hir thocht, inwith a litel space,
That in that place after hir sone she cryde,
Where he was casten in a pit bisyde.

GRETE God, that parfournest thy laude
By mouth of innocents, lo heere thy myght!
This gemme of chastite, this emeraude,
And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
Ther he, with throte ykorven, lay upright,
He Alma redemptoris gan to synge
So loude, that al the place gan to rynge!

The cristene folk that thurgh the strete wente,
In coomen, for to wondre upon this thyng;
And hastily they for the provost sente;
He cam anon, withouten taryng,
And herieth Crist that is of hevene Kyng,
And eek his mooder, honour of mankynde,
And after that, the Jewes leet he bynde.

This child, with pitous lamentacioun,
Uptaken was, synyng his song alway;
And with honour of greet processoun
They carien hym unto the next abbay.
His mooder swownynge by the beere lay;
Annethe myghte the peple that was there
This newe Rachel brynge fro his beere.



WITH torment, and with shameful
deeth echon,
This provost dooth these Jewes
for to sterve
That of this mordre wiste, and that anon;
He nolde no swich cursednesse observe,
Yvele shal have, that yvele wol deserve,
Therfore with wilde hors he dide hem drawe,
And after that he heng hem, by the lawe.

DON his beere ay lith this innocent
Biform the chief auter, whil masse
laste,
And after that, the abbot with his covent
han sped hem for to burien hym ful faste;
And whan they hooly water on hym caste,
Yet spak this child whan spreind was hooly
water,
And song, O Alma redemptoris mater!

This abbot, which that was an hooly man,
As monkes been, or elles oghten be,
This yonge child to conjure he bigan,
And seyde, O deere child, I halse thee,
In vertu of the hooly Trinitee,
Tel me what is thy cause for to synge,
Sith that thy throte is kut, to my semyng?

My throte is kut unto my nekke-boon,
Seyde this child, and, as by wey of kynde,
I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agon;
But Yhesu Crist, as ye in bookes fynde,
Wilt that his glorie laste and be in mynde,
And, for the worship of his mooder deere,
Yet may I synge O Alma, loude and cleere.

This welle of mercy, Cristes mooder sweete,
I loved alwey, as after my konnyng,
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,
To me she cam, and bad me for to synge
This anthem verrailly in my deyyng,
As ye han herd, and whan that I hadde songe,
Methoughte she leyde a greyn upon my tonge.

Wherfore I synge, and synge I moot certeyn
In honour of that blisful mayden free,
Til fro my tonge oftaken is the greyn;
And afterward thus seyde she to me,
My litel child, now wol I fecche thee
Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge ytake;
Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake.

THIS hooly monk, this abbot, hym meene,
His tonge outcaughte, and took away
the greyn,

And he yaf up the goost ful softely.
And whan this abbot hadde this wonder seyn,
His salte teeris trikkled down as reyn,
And gruf he fil, al plat upon the grounde,
And stille he lay as he had ben ybounde.

The covent eek lay on the pavement
Wepyng, and heryen Cristes mooder deere,
And after that they ryse, and forth been went,
And toke away this martir from his beere;
And in a tombe of marbul stones cleere,
Enclosen they his litel body sweete:
Ther he is now, God leve us for to meete!

O yonge Hugh of Lyncoln, slayn also
With cursyd Jewes, as it is notable,
for it is but a litel while ago;
Preye eek for us, we synful folk unstable,
That of his mercy, God so merciable,
On us his grete mercy multiplie
for reverence of his mooder, Marie.

Amen. Heere is ended the Prioresses Tale.

Bihoold the murye wordes of the Hoost to
Chaucer.

HEERE BIGYNNETH CHAUCERS TALE OF THOPAS.

The first fit.

ISTETH, lordes, in good
entent,
And I wol telle verrayment
Of myrthe and of solas;
Al of a knyght was fair and
gent
In bataille and in tourney-
ment,
His name was sire Thopas.

Yborn he was in fer contree,

In flaundes, al biyonde the see,

At Dopering, in the place;

His fader was a man ful free,

And lord he was of that contree,

As it was Goddes grace.

Sire Thopas wax a doghty swayn;

Whit was his face as payndemayn,

His lippes rede as rose;

His rode is lyk scarlet in grayn,

And I yow telle in good certayn

he hadde a semely nose.

His heer, his berd, was lyk saffroun,

That to his girdel raughte adoun;

His shoon of cordewane.

Of Brugges were his hosen broun,

His robe was of syklatoun

That coste many a jane.

he koude hunte at wilde deer,

And ride an haukyng for riveer

With grey goshawk on bonde;

Therto he was a good archeer,

Of wrastlyng was ther noon his peer,

Ther any ram shal stonde.

ful many a mayde, bright in bour,

They moorne for hym, paramour,

JHAN seyde was al this miracle, every
man
As sobre was, that wonder was to se,
Til that oure hooste japen tho bigan,
And thanne at erst he looked upon
me,

And seyde thus: What man artow? quod he;
Thou lookest as thou woldest fynde an hare;
for evere upon the ground I se thee stare.

Approche neer, and looke up murily.
Now war yow, sires, and lat this man have place;
he in the waast is shape as wel as I;
This were a popet in an arm tenbrace
for any womman, smal and fair of face.
he semeth elvyssh by his contenance,
for unto no wight dooth he daliaunce.

Sey now somwhat, syn oother folk han sayd;

Telle us a tale of myrthe, and that anon.

Hooste, quod I, ne beth nat yvele apayd,

for oother tale certes kan I noon,

But of a rym I lerned longe agoon.

Ye, that is good, quod he, now shul we heere

Som deyntee thyng, methynketh by his cheere.

Whan hem were bet to slepe;

But he was chaast, and no lechour,

And sweete as is the brembul flour

That bereth the red hepe.

AND so bifel upon a day

for sothe, as I yow telle may,

Sire Thopas wolde out ride;

he worth upon his steede gray,

And in his hand a launcegay,

A long sword by his side.

he priketh thurgh a fair forest,

Therinne is many a wilde best,

Ye, bothe bukke and hare;

And as he priketh north and est

I telle it yow, hym hadde alrest

Bitidde a sory care.

Ther spryngen herbes grete and smale,

The lycorys and cetewale,

And many a clowe/gylofre;

And notemuge to putte in ale,

Whether it be moyste or stale,

Or for to leye in cofre.

The briddes synge, it is no nay,

The sparhawk and the papejay,

That joye it was to heere;

The thrustelcok made eek his lay,

The wodedowe upon the spray

She sang ful loude and cleere.

Sire Thopas fil in love/longyng

Al whan he herde the thrustel synge,

And pryked as he were wood;

His faire steede in his prikyng

So swatte that men myghte him wryng,

His sydes were al blood.

Sire Thopas eek so wery was

for prikyng on the softe gras,

So fiers was his corage,
That down he leyde him in that plas
To make his steede som solas,
And yaf hym good forage.
O seinte Marie, benedicite!
What eyeth this love at me
To bynde me so soore?
Me dremed al this nyght, pardee,
An Elf/queene shal my lemman be
And slepe under my goore.
An Elf/queene wol I love, ywis,
for in this world no woman is
Worthy to be my make
In towne;

Alle othere women I forsake,
And to an Elf/queene I me take
By dale and eek by downe.

IN TO his sadel he clamb anon,
And priketh over stile and stoon
An Elf/queene for tespye;
Til he so longe hadde riden and goon
That he foond, in a pryve woon,
The contree of fairye
So wilde;

for in that contree was ther noon
That to him dorste ryde or goon,
Neither wyf ne childe;
Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,
His name was sire Olifaunt,
A perilous man of dede;
He seyde, Child, by Termagaunt!
But if thou prike out of myn haunt,
Anon I sle thy steede
With mace!
Heere is the queene of fayerye,
With harpe, and pipe, and symphonye,
Dwellynge in this place.

THE child seyde, Also moote I thee!
Tomorwe wol I meete thee
Whan I have myn armoure.
And yet I hope, par ma fay,
That thou shalt with this launcegay
Abyen it ful sowre;

Thy mawe
Shal I peren, if I may,
Er it be fully pryde of day,
for heere thou shalt be slawe.
Sire Thopas drow abak ful faste;
This geant at hym stoncs caste
Out of a fel staf/slyng;
But faire escapeth sire Thopas;
And al it was thurgh Goddes gras,
And thurgh his fair berynge.

ET listeth, lordes, to my tale
Murier than the nightyngale,
for now I wol yow rowne
How sir Thopas with sydes smale,
Prikyng over hill and dale,
Is comen agayn to towne.
His murie men comanded he
To make hym bothe game and glee,
for nedes moste he fighte
With a geaunt with hevedes thre,

for paramour and jolitee
Of oon that shoon ful brighte.
Do come, he seyde, my mynstrales,
And geestours for to tellen tales,
Anon in myn armyng;
Of romances that been roiales
Of popes and of cardinales
And eek of love/likyng.

They fette hym first the sweete wyn,
And mede eek in a mazelyn,
And roial spicerye
Of gyngebreed that was ful fyn,
And lycorys, and eek comyn,
With sugre that is so trye.
He dide next his white leere
Of clooth of lake, fyn and cleere,
A breech and eek a sherte;
And next his sherte an aketoun,
And over that an haubergeoun
for Percyng of his herte;
And over that a fyn hawberk,
Was al ywrought of Jewes werk,
ful strong it was of plate;
And over that his cote/armour,
As whit as is a lilye flour,

In which he wol debate.
His sheeld was al of gold so reed,
And therinne was a bores heed,
A charbocle bisyde;
And there he swoor, on ale and breed,
How that the geaunt shal be deed,
Bityde what bityde!

His jambeux were of quyrboilly,
His swerdes shethe of yvory,
His helm of laton bright;
His sadel was of rewel/boon;
His brydel as the sonne shoon,
Or as the moone light.
His spere it was of fyn ciprees,
That bodeth werre, and nothyng pees,
The heed ful sharpe ygrounde;
His steede was al dappel/gray,
It gooth an ambil in the way
ful softely and rounde
In londe.

Loo, lordes myne, heere is a fit!
If ye wol any moore of it,
To telle it wol I fonde.

The Second fit.

OW holde youre mouth, par
charitee,
Bothe knyght and lady free,
And herkneth to my spelle;
Of batailles and of chivalry,
And of ladyes love/drury,
Anon I wol yow telle.
Men speken of romances
of prys,
Of horn child, & of Ypottys,

Of Bevis and of sir Gy,
Of sir Lybeux and Pleyndamour;
But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour
Of roial chivalry!

his goode steede al he bistrood,
And forth upon his wey he rood,
As sparle out of the bronde;
Upon his creest he bar a tour,
And therinne stiked a lilye flour,
God shilde his cors fro shonde!
And for he was a knyght auntrous,
He nolde slepen in noon hous,
But ligen in his hooode;
his brighte helm was his wonger,
And by hym baiteth his dextrer
Of herbes fyne and goode.
Hymself drank water of the well,
As dide the knyght sire Percyvell,
So worthy under wede;
Til on a day.....

**Heere the Hoost stynteth Chaucer of his Tale
of Thopas.**

A moore of this, for Goddes
dignitee!
Quod oure Hooste, for thou
makest me
Sowery of thy verray lewednesse
That, also wisly God my soule

blesse,
Min eres aken of thy drasty speche.
Now swich a ryme the devel I biteche!
This may wel be ryme dogerel, quod he.
Why so? quod I; why wiltow lette me
Moore of my tale than another man,
Syn that it is the beste ryme I kan?
By God, quod he, for pleyntly at a word,
Thy drasty rymyng is nat worth a toord;
Thou doost noght elles but despendest
tyme;
Sire, at o word, thou shalt no lenger ryme.

HEERE BIGYNNETH CHAUCERS TALE OF MELIBEE.

A YONG man called
Melibeus, myghty &
riche, bigat upon his
wyf, that called was
Prudence, a dogh-
ter which that call-
ed was Sophie.
Upon a day bifel,
that he for his des-
portis went into the
feeldes, hym to pleye; his wyf and eek his
doghter hath he left inwith his hous, of
which the dores weren fast yshette. Thre
of his olde foos han it espyed, and setten
laddres to the walles of his hous, and by
wyndowes been entred, & betten his wyf,
and wounded his doghter with fyve mortal
woundes in fyve sondry places; this is to
seyn, in hir feet, in hire handes, in hir erys,
in hir nose, & in hire mouth; and leften hire
for deed, and wenten away.

Lat se wher thou kanst tellen aught in geeste
Or telle in prose somewhat, at the leeste,
In which ther be som murthe, or som
doctryne.

Gladly, quod I, by Goddes sweete pyne!
I wol yow telle a litel thyng in prose
That oghte liken yow, as I suppose,
Or elles, certes, ye been to daungerous.
It is a moral tale vertuous,
Al be it told somtyme in sondry wyse
Of sundry folk, as I shal yow devyse.
As thus; ye woot that every Evangelist,
That telleth us the peyne of Jhesu Crist
Ne seith nat al thyng as his felawe dooth;
But nathelees, hir sentence is al sooth,
And alle accorden as in hire sentence,
Al be ther in hir tellyng difference;
for somme of hem seyn moore, and somme
seyn lesse,

Whan they his pitous passioun expresse,
I meene of Marke, Mathew, Luc and John;
But doutelees hir sentence is al oon.
Therefore, lordynges alle, I yow biseche,
If that ye thynke I varie as in my speche,
As thus, though that I telle somewhat moore
Of proverbes, than ye han herd bifore,
Comprehended in this litel tretys heere,
To enforce with the effect of my mateere;
And though I nat the same wordes seye,
As ye han herd, yet to yow alle I preye,
Blameth me nat; for as in my sentence
Ye shul not fynden moche difference
fro the sentence of this tretys lyte
After the which this murie tale I write,
And therefore herkneth what that I shal seye,
And lat me tellen al my tale, I preye.

Explicit.

WHAN Melibeus retourned was in-
to his hous, & saugh al this mes-
chief, he, lyk a mad man, rentyng
his clothes, gan to wepe & crie. Prudence,
his wyf, as ferforth as she dorste, bisoghte
hym of his wepyng for to stynte; but nat
forthy he gan to crie & wepen evere lenger
the moore.

HIS noble wyf Prudence remem-
bred hire upon the sentence of O-
vide, in his book that cleped is The
Remedie of Love, whereas he seith. He
is a fool that destourbeth the mooder to
wepen in the deeth of hire child, til she have
wept hir fille, as for a certein tyme; & thanne
shal man doon his diligence with amiable
wordes hire to reconforte, and preyen hire
of hir wepyng for to stynte. for which re-
soun this noble wyf Prudence suffred hir
housbonde for to wepe & crie as for a cer-
tein space; and whan she saugh hir tyme,

she seyde hym in this wise: Alas, my lord, quod she, why make ye youreself fro to be lyk a fool? forsothe it aperteneþ nat to a wys man to maken swiche a sorwe. Your doghter, with the grace of God, shal warisshe and escape; and, alwere it so that she right now were deed, ye ne oughte nat, as for hir deeth, youreself to destroye. Senek seith, ¶ The wise man shal nat take to greet discomfort for the deeth of his children, but certes, he sholde suffren it in pacience as wel as he abideth the deeth of his owene propre persone.

THIS Melibeeus answerde anon, and seyde, What man, quod he, sholde of his wepyng stente that hath so greet a cause for to wepe? Jhesu Crist, oure Lord, hymself wepte for the deeth of Lazarus, his freend. ¶ Prudence answerde, Certes, wel I woot, attempre wepyng is noþyng defendid to hym that sorweful is amonges folk in sorwe, but it is rather graunted hym to wepe. The Apostle Paul unto the Romayns writeth, ¶ Man shal rejoyse with hem that maken joye, and wepen with swich folk as wepen. ¶ But though attempre wepyng be ygraunted, outrageous wepyng certes is defendid. Mesure of wepyng sholde be considered, after the loore that techeth us Senek. ¶ Whan that thy frend is deed, quod he, lat nat thynne eyen to moyste been of teeris, ne to muche drye; although the teeris come to thynne eyen, lat hem nat falle; and whan thou hast forgoon thy freend, do diligence to gete another freend; & this is moore wysdom than for to wepe for thy freend which that thou hast lorn; for therein is no boote. ¶ And therefore, if ye governe yow by sapience, put away sorwe out of youre herte. Remembre yow that Jhesus Syrak seith, ¶ A man that is joyous and glad in herte, it hym conserveth florissynge in his age; but soothly sorweful herte maketh his bones drye. ¶ He seith eek thus: That sorwe in herte sleeth ful many a man. Salomon seith, ¶ That right as motthes in the shupes flees anyeth to the clothes, and the smale wormes to the tree, right so anyeth sorwe to the herte. ¶ Wherefore us oghte as wel in the deeth of oure children as in the losse of oure goodes temporels, have pacience.

REMEMBRE yow upon the pacient Job. Whan he hadde lost his children and his temporels substance, and in his body endured and receyved ful many a grevous tribulation; yet seyde he thus, ¶ Oure Lord hath sente it me; our Lord hath biraft it me; right as oure Lord hath wold, right so it is doon; blessed be the name of oure Lord! ¶ To this foreseide thynges answerde Melibeeus unto his wyf Prudence: Alle thy wordes, quod he, been sothe, and

therwith profitable; but trewely myn herte is troubled with this sorwe so grevous, that I noot what to doon. ¶ Lat calle, quod Prudence, thy trewe freendes alle, & they shal cas and herkeneth what they seye in conseil. ¶ And yow governe after hire sentence. Salomon seith, Werk alle thy thynges in conseil, and thou shalt never repente.

PRUDENCE, by the conseil of his wyf, a greet congregacioun of folk; as surgeons, phisiciens, olde folk and yonge, and somme of his olde enemys reconciled, as by hir semblaunt, to his love and into his grace; and therewithal ther coomen somme of his neighbores that didnen hym reverence moore for drede than for love, as a subtille flaterer, & wise advocats lerned in the lawe.

AND whan this folk togidre assembled weren, this Melibeeus in swich a weful wise shewed hem his cas; & by the manere of his speche it semed wel that in herte he baar a cruel ire, redy to doon vengeance upon his foos, & sodeynly desired that the were sholde bigynne, but natheless, yet axed he here conseil upon this matiere.

SURGIEN, by licence and assent of swiche as weren wise, uproos and to Melibeeus seyde as ye may here: Sir, quod he, as to us surgien aperteneþ that we do to every wight the beste that we kan; whereas we been withholde, and to oure pacients that we do no damage; wherefore it happeth, many tyme & ofte, that whan twi men han everich wounded oother, oon same surgien heeleth hem bothe; wherefore unto oure art it is nat pertinent to norice werre, ne parties to supporte. But certes, as to the warissynge of youre doghter, albe it so that she perilously be wounded, we shullen do so ententif bisynesse fro day to nyght, that with the grace of God she shal be hoool and sound as soone as is possible.

ALMOOST right in the same wise the phisiciens answerden, save that they seyden a fewe woordes moore; That right as maladies been cured by hir contraries, right so shul men warisshe werre by vengeance.

HIS neighbores, ful of envye, his fermed freendes that semeden reconciled, and his flaterers, maden semblant of wepyng, and empeireden and aggregated muchel of this matiere, in preisynge greetly Melibee, of myght, of power, of riches, and of freendes, despisyng the power of his adversaries, and seiden outrelly that he anon sholde wreken hym on his foos, and bigynne werre.

PROOS thanne an advocat that was wys, by leve & by conseil of othere that were wise, & seide: Lordynges, the nede for which we been assembled in this place is a ful hevychyng, and an heigh matiere, bycause of the wrong and of the wikkednesse that hath bedoon, and eek by resoun of the grete damages that in tyme comynge been possible to fallen for this same cause; and eek by resoun of the grete riches & power of the parties bothe; for the whiche resouns it were a ful greet peril to erren in this matiere. ¶ Wherefore, Melibeeus, this is oure sentence. ¶ We conseillean yow aboven alle thyng, that right anon thou do thy diligence in kepyng of thy propre persone, in swich a wise that thou ne wante noon espie ne wacche, thy persone for to save. And after that we conseillean, that in thyn hous thou sette suffisant garnison, so that they may as wel thy body as thyn hous defende. But certes, for to moove werre, or sodeynly for to doon vengeance, we may nat demen in so litel tyme that it were profitable. ¶ Wherefore we axen leyser and espace to have deliberacioun in this cas to deme. for the commune proverbe seith thus, ¶ He that soone deemeth, soone shal repente. ¶ And eek men seyn that thilke juge is wys, that soone understondeth a matiere and juggeth by leyser; for albe it so that alle taryng be anyoful, algates it is nat to repreve in yevynge of juggement, ne in vengeance taking, whan it is suffisant & resonable; and that shewed oure Lord Jhesu Crist by ensample; for whan that the womman that was taken in avowtrie was brought in his presence, to knowen what sholde be doon with hire persone, albe it so that he wiste wel hymself what that he wolde answer, yet ne wolde he nat answer sodeynly, but he wolde have deliberacioun, and in the ground he wroot twies. And by these causes we axen deliberacioun, and we shal thanne, by the grace of God, conseillean thee thyng that shal be profitable.

Pstirten thanne the yong folk at ones, & the mooste partie of that compaignye han scorned the olde wise men, & bigonnen to make noyse, and seyden: that, ¶ Right so as whil that iren is hoot, men sholden smyte, right so, men sholde wreken hir wronges while that they been fresshe and newe. ¶ And with loud voys they criden, Werre! werre!

PROOS tho oon of these olde wise, & with his hand made contenance that men sholde holden hem stille, and yeven hym audience. Lordynges, quod he, there is ful many a man that crieth Werre! werre! that woot fullitel what werre amounteth. Werre at his bigynnyng bath

so greet an entryng and so large, that every wight may entre whan hym liketh, & lightly fynde werre; but certes, what ende that shal therof bifalle, it is nat light to knowe. for soothly, whan that werre is ones bigonne, ther is ful many a child unborn of his mooder, that shal sterve yong bycause of that ilke werre, or elles lyve in sorwe & dye in wretchednesse; and therefore, er that any werre bigynne, men mooste have greet conseil & greet deliberacioun. ¶ And whan this olde man wende to enforcen his tale by reasons, wel ny alle at ones bigonne they to rise for to breken his tale, and beden hym ful ofte his wordes for to abregge; for soothly, he that prebeth to hem that listen nat heer, en his wordes, his sermon hem anoieth, for Jhesus Syrak seith: that, ¶ Musik in wepyng is a noyous thyng. ¶ This is to seyn; as muche availleth to speken bifore folk to whiche his speche anoyeth, as doth to syng biforn hym that wepeth. And whan this wiseman saugh that hym wanted audience, al shamefast he sette hym doun agayn, for Salomon seith, Theras thou ne mayst have noon audience, enforce thee nat to speke.

SEE wel, quod this wise man, that the commune proverbe is sooth, that Good conseil wanteth whan it is moost nede.

ET hadde this Melibeeus in his conseil many folk that prively in his eere conseillean hym certeyn thyng, and conseillean hym the contrarie in general audience. ¶ Whan Melibeeus hadde herde that the gretteste partie of his conseil weren accorded that he sholde maken werre, anon he consented to hir conseil, and fully affirmed hire sentence.

THANNE dame Prudence, whan that she saugh how that hir housbonde shoope hym for to wreken hym on his foos, & to bigynne werre, she in ful humble wise, whan she saugh hir tyme, seide to hym these wordes: My lord, quod she, I yow biseche, as hertely as I dar and kan, ne haste yow nat to faste, & for alle guerdons, as ye veth me audience, for Piers Alfonse seith, ¶ Whoso that dooth to that oother good or harm, haste thee nat to quiten it; for in this wise thy freend wole abyde, and thyn enemy shal the lenger lyve in drede. ¶ The proverbe seith, He hasteth wel that wisely kan abyde; and in wikked haste is no profit.

THIS Melibeeus answerde unto his wyf Prudence: I purpose nat, quod he, to werke by thy conseil, for many causes & resouns; for certes, every wight wolde holde me thanne a fool. This is to seyn, if I, for thy conseil, wolde chaungen thynges that been ordeyned and

affirmed by so many wyse. Secoundly, I seye that alle wommen been wikke, & noon good of hem alle; for Of a thousand men, seith Salomon, I foond o good man, but certes, of alle wommen, good woman foond I nevere. And also, certes, if I governed me by thy conseil, it sholde seme that I hadde yeve to thee over me the maistrie; and God forbode that it so were! for Jhesus Syrak seith, That if the wyf have maistrie, she is contrarious to hir housbonde; and Salomon seith, Nevere in thy lyf, to thy wyf, ne to thy child, ne to thy freend, ne yeve no power over thyself; for better it were that thy children aske of thy persone thynges that hem nedeth, than thou be thyself in the handes of thy children. And also, if I wolde werke by thy conseil, certes, my conseil, myng moste somtyme be secree, til it were tyme that it moste be knowe, and this ne may noght be; for it is written, The janglerie of wommen can hidden thynges that they witen noght. Furthermore, the philosophe saith, In wikked conseil wommen venquysse men. And for this resoun I ne ow nat usen thy conseil.

WHANNE dame Prudence, ful debonairly & with greet pacience, hadde herd al that hir housbonde liked for to seye, thanne axed she of hym licence for to speke, and seyde in this wise, My lord, quod she, as to youre firste resoun, certes it may lightly been answered; for I seye that it is no folie to chaunge conseil whan the thyng is chaunged; or elles whan the thyng semeth ootherweyes than it was bifore. And moore over I seye, that though ye han sworn and bihight to perfourme youre emprise, and natheles ye weyve to perfourme thilke same emprise by juste cause, men sholde nat seyn therefore that ye were a lier ne forsworn. For the book seith that, The wise man maketh no lesyng whan he turneth his corage to the better. And albeit so that youre emprise be establissed & ordeyned by greet multitude of folk, yet thar ye nat accomplice thilke same ordinaunce but yow like; for the trouthe of thynges & the profit been rather founden in fewe folk that been wise and ful of resoun, than by greet multitude of folk, ther every man crieth and clatereth what that hym liketh; soothly, swich multitude is nat honeste.

AS to the secounde resoun, whereas ye seyn that Alle wommen been wikke; save youre grace, certes ye despisen alle wommen in this wyse; & he that alle dispiseth alle displeth, as seith the book; and Senec seith, that whoso wole have sapience, shal no man despreise; but he shal

gladly techen the science that he kan, with outen presumpcioun or pride; and swiche thynges as he nought ne kan, he shal nat been ashamed to lerne hem and enquire of lasse folk than hymself. And sire, that ther hath been many a good woman may lightly be preved; for certes, sire, our Lord Jhesu Crist wolde nevere have descended to be born of a woman, if alle wommen hadden ben wikke. And after that, for the grete bountee that is in wommen, our Lord Jhesu Crist, whan he was risen fro deeth to lyve, appeared rather to a woman than to his Apostles; & though that Salomon seith that he ne foond nevere woman good, it folweth nat therefore that alle wommen ben wikke, for though that he ne foond no good woman, certes, ful many another man hath founden many a woman ful good and trewe. Or elles, peraventure, the entente of Salomon was this; that, as in sovereyn bountee, he foond no woman; this is to seyn, that ther is no wight that hath sovereyn bountee, save God allone; as he hymself recordeth in his evaungelie. For ther mys no creature so good that hym ne wanteth somwhat of the perfeccioun of God, that is his maker.

YOURE thridde resoun is this; ye seyn, If ye governe yow by my conseil, it sholde seme that ye hadde yeve me the maistrie & the lordshipe over youre persone. Sire, save youre grace, it is nat so. For if it were so, that no man sholde be conseilled but oonly of hem that hadden lordshipe & maistrie of his persone, men wolden nat be conseilled so ofte; for soothly, thilke man that asketh conseil of a purpos, yet hath he free choys, whether he wole werke by that conseil or noon.

AND as to youre fourthe resoun; ther ye seyn that The janglerie of wommen hath hyd thynges that they wiste noght, as who seith, that A woman kan nat hyde that she woot. Sire, these wordes been understonde of wommen that been jangleresses and wikked; of whiche wommen, men seyn that Thre thynges dryven a man out of his hous; that is to seyn, smoke, droppynge of reyn, and wikked wyves; & of swiche wommen seith Salomon, that It were better dwelle in desert, than with a woman that is riotous; and sire, by youre leve, that am nat I; for ye han ful ofte assayed my grete silence and my gret pacience; and eek how wel that I kan hyde and hele thynges that men oghte secretly to hyde.

AND soothly, as to youre fifte resoun, whereas ye seyn that In wikked conseil wommen venquysse men; God woot, thilke resoun stant heere

in no stede. For, understood now, ye ashen conseil to do wikkednesse; and if ye wole werken wikkednesse, and youre wif restreyneth thilke wikked purpos and overcometh yow by resoun and by good conseil; certes youre wyf oghte rather to be preised than yblamed. Thus sholde ye understonde the philosophe that seith, In wikked conseil wommen venquysse hir housbondes.

AND theras ye blamen alle wommen and hir resouns, I shal shewe yow by many ensamples, that many a woman hath ben ful good, and yet been; and hir counsils ful hoolsome and profitable. Eek som men han seyde that The conseil of wommen is outhere to deere, or elles to litel of pris. But, albeit so that ful many a woman is badde, and hir conseil vile & noght worth, yet han men founde ful many a good woman, and ful discrete and wise in conseil, yow.

MOO, Jacob, by good conseil of his mooder Rebekka, wan the benyngoun of Ysaak his fader, and the lordshipe over alle his bretheren. Judith, by hire good conseil, delivered the citee of Bethulie, in which she dwelled, out of the handes of Olofermus, that hadde it bisegged and wolde have al destroyed it. Abygail delivered Nabal hir housbonde fro David the kyng, that wolde have slayn hym, and apayed the ire of the kyng by hir wit and by hir good conseil. Hester enhaunced greetly by hir good conseil the peple of God in the regne of Assuerus the kyng; and the same bountee in good conseil, yow of many a good woman may men telle. And moore over, whan our Lord hadde creat Adam oure forme fader, he seyde in this wise: It is nat good to been a man allone; make we to hym an helpe sembla- ble to hymself.

THERE may ye see, that if that women were nat goode, and hir counsils goode & profitable, oure Lord God of hevne wolde nevere han wrought hem, ne called hem help of man, but rather confusioun of man. And ther seyde oones a clerk in two vers, What is better than gold? Jaspre. What is better than jaspre? Wisedoom. And what is better than wisedoom? Woman. And what is better than a good woman? Nothyng. And sire, by manye of othere resouns may ye seen, that manye wommen been goode, & hir counsils goode & profitable. And therefore, sire, if ye wol triste to my conseil, I shal restooore yow youre doghter hool and sound. And eek I wol do to yow so muche, that ye shul have honour in this cause.



MAN Melibee hadde herd the wordes of his wyf Prudence, he seyde thus: I see wel that the word of Salomon is sooth. He seith that Wordes that been spoken discretly, by ordinaunce, been honycombes; for they even swetnesse to the soule, and hool- somnesse to the body; and, wyf, bycause of thy sweete wordes, and eek for I have assayed & preved thy grete sapience and thy grete trouthe, I wol governe me by thy conseil in alle thyng.

NOW sire, quod dame Prudence, and syn ye vouchesauf to been govern- ed by my conseil, I wol enforme yow how ye shul governe youreself in ches- ynge of youre conseilours. Ye shul first, in alle youre werkes mekely biseken to the heighe God that he wol be youre conseil- lour; & shapeth yow to swich entente, that he yeve yow conseil & confort, as taughte Thobie his sone. At alle tymes thou shalt blesse God, and praye hym to dresse thy weyes; and looke that alle thy counsils been in hym for everemoore. Seint Jame eek seith, If any of yow have nede of sapience, axe it of God. And afterward, thanne shul ye taken conseil of youreself and examyne wel youre thoghtes of swich thyng as yow thynketh that is best for youre profit; and thanne shul ye dryve fro youre herte thre thynges that been contrarious to good conseil, that is to seyn, ire, covetise, and hastifnesse.

FIRST, he that axeth conseil of hym- self, certes he moste been withouten ire, for manye causes. The firste is this: he that hath greet ire and wrathe in hymself, he weneth alwey that he may do thyng that he may nat do. And secoundly, he that is irous and wrooth, he ne may nat wel deme; & he that may nat wel deme, may nat wel conseil. The thridde is this; that he that is irous & wrooth, as seith Senec, ne may nat speke but he blame thynges; & with his viciouse wordes he stireth oother folk to angre and to ire. And eek sire, ye moste dryve covetise out of youre herte; for the apostle seith that Covetise is roote of alle harmes; and trust wel that a covet- ous man ne kan noght deme ne thynke, but oonly to fulfill the ende of his covet- ise; and certes, that ne may nevere been ac- complished; for evere the moore habund- aunce that he hath of riches, the moore he desireth. And sire, ye moste also dryve out of youre herte hastifnesse; for certes, ye ne may nat deeme for the beste a sodeyn thought that falleth in youre herte, but ye moste avyse yow on it ful ofte. For as ye herde bifore, the commune proverbe is this, that he that soone deemeth, soone repent;

eth. Sire, yene be nat alwey in lyke disposi-
cion; for certes somthyng that somtyme
semeth to yow that it is good for to do, an-
other tyme it semeth to yow the contrarie.

WHAN ye han taken conseil of
yoursel, & han demed by good
deliberacion swich thyng as you
semyth best, thanne rede I yow, that ye
kepe it secree. Biwrey nat youre conseil to
no persone, but if so be that ye wenen sike-
ly that thurgh youre biwreyng, youre con-
dicion shal be to yow the moore profit-
able. for Ihesus Syrak seith, Neither to
thy foo ne to thy frend discovere nat thy
secree ne thy folie; for they wol yewe yow
audience and lookynge and supportacioun
in thy presence, and scorne thee in thyn ab-
sence. Another clerk seith, that Scarsly
shal thou fynden any persone that may kepe
conceil secreely.

THE book seith, Whil that thou
kepest thy conseil in thyn herte,
thou kepest it in thy prisoun; and
whan thou biwreyest thy conseil to any
wight, he holdeth thee in his snare. And
therefore yow is bettre to hyde youre con-
seil in youre herte, than praye him to whom
ye han biwreyed youre conseil, that he wole
hepen it cloos & stille; for Seneca seith, If
so be that thou ne mayst nat thyn owene
conceil hyde, how darstou prayen any oo-
ther wight thy conseil secreely to kepe?

BUT natheles, if thou wene sike-
ly that the biwreyng of thy conseil to a
persone wol make thy condicion to
stonden in the bettre plyt, thanne shaltou
tellen hym thy conseil in this wise. first,
thou shalt makeno semblant wheither thee
were levere pees or werre, or this or that, ne
shewe hym nat thy wille and thyn entente;
for trust wel, that comunly these conseil-
lours been flatereres, namely the conseil-
lours of grette lordes; for they enforcen hem
alwey rather to speken plesantewordes, en-
clynynge to the lordes lust, than wordes
that been trewe or profitable. And therefore
men seyn, that The riche man hath seeld
good conseil but if he have it of hymself.

AN after that, thou shalt considere
thy frendes & thyne enemys. And
as touchynge thy frendes, thou
shalt considere whiche of hem been moost
feithful and moost wise, & eldest, & moost
approved in conseil; and of hem shalt
thou aske thy conseil as the caas requieth.

SEVE that first ye shul clepe to
yoursel conseil youre frendes that
been trewe, for Salomon seith that
Right as the herte of a man deliteth in
savour that is soote, right so the conseil of
trewe frendes yeveth swetnesse to the
soule. He seith also, Ther may no thyng
be likned to the trewe frend. for certes,

gold ne silver beth nat so muche worth as
the goodewyl of a trewe frend. And eek,
he seith that, A trewe frend is a strong
deffense; whoso that hym fyndeth, certes,
he fyndeth a greet tresour.

THANNE shul ye eek considere, if that
yoursel trewe frendes been discreet
and wise, for the book seith, Hwe
alwey thy conseil of hem that been wise.
And by this same resoun shul ye clepe to
yoursel conseil of youre frendes that been
of age, swiche as han seyn and been expert
in manye thynges, & been approved in con-
seill; for the book seith that In the
olde men is the sapience, & in longe tyme
the prudence. And Tullius seith: that Grette
thynges ne been nat ay accomplice by
strengthe, ne by delivernesse of body, but
by good conseil, by auctoritee of persones,
and by science; the whiche thre thynges ne
been nat fieble by age, but certes, they en-
forcen & encreasen day by day. And thanne
shul ye kepe this for a general reule.
first shul ye clepe to youre conseil a fewe
of youre frendes that been especialey; for
Salomon seith, Manye frendes have
thou; but among a thousand, chese thee
oon to be thy conseilour, for, albe it so that
thou first ne telle thy conseil but to a fewe,
thou mayst afterward telle it to moore folk;
if it be nede. But looke alwey that thy con-
seillours have thilke thre condicions that
I have seyd bifore; that is to seyn, that they
be trewe, wise, and of oold experience. And
werke nat alwey in every nede by oon con-
seillour allone; for somtyme bihoveth it
to been conseilled by manye; for Salomon
seith, Salvacioun of thynges is wheras
ther been manye conseilours.

NOW, sith I have toold yow of whiche
folk ye sholde been conseilled, now
wol I teche yow whiche conseil ye oghte
to eschewe. first, ye shul eschewe the con-
seill; for Salomon seith, Taak no conseil of a fool, for he ne kan
nought conseil but after his owene lust
and his affeccion. The book seith: that
The propretee of a fool is this, He trow-
eth lightly harm of every wight, & lightly
troweth alle bountee in hymself. Thou
shalt eek eschewe the conseil; for alle
flatereres, swiche as enforcen hem rather
to preise youre persone by flaterye, than
for to telle yow the soothfastnesse of
thynges.

THEREFORE Tullius seith, Al-
monges alle the pestilences that
been in frendshipe the gretteste
is flaterie. And therefore it is moore nede
that thou eschewe and drede flatereres than
any oother peple. The book seith, Thou
shalt rather drede and flee fro the swete
wordes of flaterynge preiseres, than fro the

egre wordes of thy frend that seith thee
thy sothes. Salomon seith: that, The
wordes of a flaterere is a snare to cacche
with innocents. He seith also, that, He
that speke to his frend wordes of swet-
nesse & of plesauce, setteth a net bifore
his feet to cacche hym. And therefore,
seith Tullius, Encline nat thyne eres
to flatereres, ne taaketh no conseil of the
wordes of flaterye. And Caton seith,
Hysse thee wel, and eschue the wordes of
swetnesse and of plesauce.

AN eek thou shalt eschue the con-
seill; of thyne old enemys that
been reconciled. The book seith:
that No wight retourneth sauily into the
grace of his old enemy; and Isopse seith,
Ne trust nat to hem to whiche thou hast
had somtyme werre or enemytee, ne telle
hem nat thy conseil. And Seneca telleth
the cause why. It may nat be, seith he,
that where greet fyr hath longe tyme en-
dured, that ther ne dwelleth som vapour
of warmnesse. And therefore seith Salo-
mon, In thyn olde foo trust nevere, for
sikerly, though thyn enemy be reconciled
and maketh thee chiere of humylitee, and
lowteth to thee with his heed, ne trust hym
nevere; for certes, he maketh thilke feyned
humylitee moore for his profit than for any
love of thy persone; bycause that he deem-
eth to have victorie over thy persone by
swich feyned contenance, the which victorie
he myght nat wyne by strif or werre. And
Peter Alfonce seith, Make no felawshipe
with thyne olde enemys; for if thou do hem
bountee, they wol perverten it into wikked-
nesse.

AN eek thou most eschue the con-
seill; of hem that been thy ser-
vants & beren thee greet reverence;
for peraventure they doon it moore for
drede than for love. And therefore seith a
philosophre in this wise, Ther is no
wight parfitly trewe to hym that he to soore
dredeth. And Tullius seith, Ther nys
no myght so greet of any emperour, that
longemay endure, but if he have moore love
of the peple than drede.

THOU shalt also eschue the conseil-
ling of folk that been dronkelewe;
for they kan no conseil hyde. for
Salomon seith, Ther is no privetee ther,
as regneth dronkenesse. Yes shul also han
in suspect the conseil; of swich folk as
conseille yow a thyng prively, and conseille
yow the contrarie openly; for Cassidorie
seith: that, It is a manere sleight to hyn-
dre, whan he sheweth to doona thyng open-
ly and werketh prively the contrarie.

THOU shalt also have in suspect the
conseill; of wikked folk; for the
book seith, The conseil; of wikked

ked folk is alwey ful of fraude. And David
seith, Blisful is that man that hath nat
folwed the conseil; of shrewes. Thou
shalt also eschue the conseil; of yong
folk; for hir conseil is nat ripe.

NOW, sith I have shewed yow of
whiche folk ye shul take youre con-
seil, and of whiche folk ye shul folwe
the conseil, now wol I teche yow how ye shal
examine youre conseil, after the doctrine
of Tullius.

In the examynynge thanne of youre
conseillour, ye shul considere manye
thynges. Alderfirst thou shalt con-
sidere, that in thilke thyng that thou pur-
posest, & upon what thyng thou wolt have
conceil, that verray trouthe be seyd and
conserved; this is to seyn, telle trewely thy
tale; for he that seith fals may nat wel be
conseilled in that cas of whiche he lieth.

AN after this, thou shalt considere
the thynges that acorden to that
thou purposest for to do by thy
conseillours, if resoun accorde therto; and
eek, if thy myght may atteine therto; and if
the moore part and the bettre part of thy
conseillours acorde therto, or no. Thanne
shaltou considere what thyng shal folwe
after hir conseil; as hate, pees, werre,
grace, profit, or damage; and manye othere
thynges. And of alle these thynges, thou
shalt chese the beste, and weyvealle othere
thynges. Thanne shaltou considere of
what roote is engendred the matiere of thy
conceil, and what fruyt it may conceyve
and engendre. Thou shalt eek considere
alle these causes, fro whennes they been
sprongen.

AN when ye han examyned youre
conceil as I have seyd, and whiche
partie is the bettre and moore pro-
fitable, and hast approved it by manye wise
folk and olde; thanne shaltou considere
if thou mayst parfourne it and maken of it
a good ende. for certes, resoun wol nat that
any man sholde bigynne a thyng, but if he
myghte parfourne it as hym oghte. Ne no
wight sholde take upon hym so hevy a
charge that he myghte nat bere it, for the
proverbe seith, He that to muche em-
braceh, distreyneth litel. And Catoun
seith, Assay to do swich thyng as thou
hast power to doon, lest that the charge
oppresseth thee so soore, that thee bihoveth
to weyve thyng that thou hast bigonne.
And if so be that thou be in doute wheither
thou mayst parfourne a thyng or noon,
chese rather to suffre than bigynne. And
Piers Alfonce seith, If thou hast
myght to doona thyng of whiche thou most
repente thee, it is bettre Nay, than Ye.
This is to seyn, that thee is bettre holde
thy tonge stille, than for to speke.

THANNE may ye understonde by stronger resons that if thou hast power to parfourn a werk of which thou shalt repente, thanne is it better that thou suffre than bigynne. Wel seyn they, that defenden every wight to assaye any thyng of which he is in doute, whether he may parfourn it or no. And after, when ye han examyned youre conseil, as I have seyde bifore, and knowen wel that ye may parfourn youre emprise, conferme it thanne sadly til it be at an ende.

Now is it resoun & tyme that I shewe yow, whanne & wherefore that ye may chaunge youre conseilours withouten youre repreve. Soothly, a man may chaungen his purpos and his conseil if the cause cesseth, or whan a newe caas bytydeth; for the lawe seith: that Upon thynges that newly bytyden bihoveth newe conseil. And Senec seith: If thy conseil is comen to the eeris of thy enemy, chaunge thy conseil. Thou mayst also chaunge thy conseil if so be that thou fynde that, by error or by oother cause, harm or damage may bytyde. Also, if thy conseil be dishonest, or ellis cometh of dishoneste cause, chaunge thy conseil; for the lawe seyn: that Alle bihestes that been dishoneste been of no value; and eek, if it so be that it be impossible, or may nat goodly be parfourned or kept.

AND take this for a general reule, that every conseil that is affirmed so strongly that it may nat be chaunged, for no condicioun that may bytyde, I seye that thilke conseil is wikked.

THIS Melibeus, whanne he hadde herd the doctrine of his wyf, dame Prudence, answered in this wyse. Dame, quod he, as yet in to this tyme ye han wel and covenably taught me as in general how I shal governe me in the chesynge and in the witholdynge of my conseilours. But now wolde I fayn that ye wolde condescende in especial, and telle me how liketh yow, or what semeth yow by youre conseilours that we han chosen in oure present nede.

My lord, quod she, I biseke yow in al humblesse, that ye wol nat wilfully replie agayn my resouns, ne distempre youre herte, though I speke thyng that yow displese, for God woot that as in myn entente, I speke it for youre beste, for youre honour, & for youre profite eek; and soothly, I hope that youre benygnytee wol taken it in pacience. Trusteth me wel, quod she, that youre conseil as in this caas ne sholde nat, as to speke properly, be called a conseillyng, but a mocion or a moevyng of folye; in which conseil ye han erred in many a sondry wise.

FIRST and forward, ye han erred in thassemblyng of youre conseilours; for ye sholde first have cleped a fewe folk to youre conseil, & after ye myghte han shewed it to mo folk, if it hadde been nede. But certes, ye han so deynly cleped to youre conseil a greet multitude of peple, ful chargeant & ful annoyous for to heere. Also, ye han erred, for thereas ye sholden oonly have cleped to youre conseil youre trewe frendes olde & wise, ye han ycleped straunge folk, and yong folk, false flaterers and enemys reconsiled, & folk that doon yow reverence withouten love. And eek also ye have erred, for ye han brought with yow to youre conseil, ire, covetise, and hastifnesse; the whiche thre thynges been contrarious to every conseil honeste and profitable; the whiche thre ye han nat anientissed or destroyed hem, neither in youre self ne in youre conseilours, as yow oghte. Ye han erred also, for ye han shewed to youre conseilours youre talent and youre affection to make werre anon, and for to do vengeance. They han espied by youre wordes to what thyng ye been enclined; and therefore han they rather conseilled yow to youre talent than to youre profit.

Ehan erred also, for it semeth that it suffiseth to han been conseilled by these conseilours oonly, & with litel avys; whereas in so greet and so heigh a nede, it hadde been necessarie mo conseilours, and moore deliberacioun to parfourn youre emprise.

Ehan erred also, for ye han nat examyned youre conseil in the forseide manere, ne in due manere as the caas requireth. Ye han erred also, for ye han nat maked no divisioun bitwixte youre conseilours; this is to seyn, bitwixte youre trewe frendes & youre feyned conseilours; ne ye han nat knowe the wil of youre trewe frendes, olde and wise; but ye han cast alle hire wordes in an hoche pot, and enclined youre herte to the moore part and to the gretter nombre; and there been ye condescended. And, sith ye woot wel that men shal alwey fynde a gretter nombre of foolles than of wise men, and therefore the conseils that been at congregaciouns and multitudes of folk, thereas men take moore reward to the nombre than to the sapience of persones, ye see wel that in swiche conseillynges foolles han the maistrie.

MELIBEUS answered agayn, and seyde. I graunte wel that I have erred; but thereas thou hast toold me heer bifore, that he nys nat to blame that chaungeth his conseilours in certein caas, and for certein juste causes, I am

al redy to chaunge my conseilours, right as thou wolt devyse. The proverbe seith: that for to do synne is mannyssh, but certes, for to persevere longe in synne is werk of the devel.

O this sentence answerde anon dame Prudence, and seyde. Examyneth, quod she, youre conseil and lat us see the whiche of hem han spoken most resonably, and taught yow best conseil. And forasmuche as that the examynacioun is necessarye, lat us bigynne at the surgiens & at the phisiciens that first speeken in this matiere. I seye yow, that the surgiens & phisiciens han seyde yow in youre conseil discreetly, as hem oghte; & in hir speche seyden ful wisely, that to the office of hem aperteneth to doon to every wight honour and profit, and no wight for to anoye; and, in hir craft, to doon greet diligence unto the cure of hem whiche that they han in hir governance. And sire, right as they han answered wisely and discreetly, right so rede I that they been heighly & sovereynly guerdoned for hir noble speche; & eek for they sholde do the moore ententif bisynesse in the curacioun of youre doghter deere. For, albeit so that they been youre frendes, therefore shal ye nat suffren that they serve yow for noght; but ye oghte the rather guerdone hem and shewe hem youre largesse.

AND as touchynge the proposicioun which that the phisiciens entreteden in this caas: this is to seyn, that in maladies, that oon contrarie is warissshed by another contrarie; I wolde fayn knowe how ye understonde thilke text, and what is youre sentence.

CERTES, quod Melibeus, I understonde it in this wise: that right as they han doon me a contrarie, right so sholde I doon hem another. For right as they han venged hem on me and doon me wrong, right so shal I venge me upon hem, and doon hem wrong; and thanne have I cured oon contrarie by another.

My lord, lo! quod dame Prudence, how lightly is every man enclined to his owene desir and to his owene pleasure! Certes, quod she, the wordes of the phisiciens ne sholde nat han been understonden in this wise. For certes, wikkednesse is nat contrarie to wikkednesse, ne vengeance to vengeance, ne wrong to wrong, but they been semblable; & therefore, o vengeance is nat warissshed by another vengeance, ne o wroong by another wroong; but everich of hem encreeseth & aggreggeth oother.

BUT certes, the wordes of the phisiciens sholde been understonden in this wise; for good and wikked-

nesse been two contraries, and pees and werre, vengeance and suffraunce, discord and accord, and manye othere thynges. But certes, wikkednesse shal be warissshed by goodnesse, discord by accord, werre by pees, and so forth of othere thynges. And heerto accordeth Seint Paul the Apostle in manye places. He seith: Ne yeldeth nat harm for harm, ne wikked speche for wikked speche; but do wel to hym that dooth thee harm, & blesse hym that seith to thee harm. And in manye othere places he amonesteth pees and accord.

Now wol I speke to yow of the conseil which that was yeven to yow by the men of lawe and the wise folk, that seyden alle by oon accord, as ye han herd bifore; that over alle thynges, ye sholde doon your diligence to kepen youre persone & to warnestooore youre hous; and seyden also, that in this caas ye oghten for to werken ful avysely and with greet deliberacioun. And sire, as to the firste point, that toucheth to the kepyng of youre persone; ye shul understonde that he that hath werre shal everemoore mekely and devoutly preyen bifore alle thynges, that Jhesus Crist of his grete mercy wol han hym in his proteccioun & been his sovereyn helpyng at his nede. For certes, in this world ther is no wight that may be conseilled ne kept suffisantly withouten the kepyng of oure Lord Jhesu Crist.

O this sentence accordeth the prophete David, that seith. If God ne kepe the citee, in ydel waketh he that it kepeth. Now sire, thanne shul ye committe the kepyng of youre persone to youre trewe frendes that been approved and yknowe; and of hem shul ye axen helpe, youre persone for to kepe; for Catoun seith. If thou hast nede of help, axe it of thy frendes; for ther nys noon so good a phisicien as thy trewe frend.

AND after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow fro alle straunge folk, and fro lyeres, & have alwey in suspect hire compaignye; for Piers Plouman seith. Ne taak no compaignye by the weye of a straunge man, but if so be that thou have knowe hym of a lenger tyme. And if so be that he be falle into thy compaignye, paraventure, withouten thyn assent, enquire thanne as subtilly as thou mayst, of his conversacioun, and of his lyf bifore, and feyne thy wey. Seye that thou goost thider as thou wolt nat go; & if he bereth a spere, hoold thee on the right syde, and if he bere a swerd, hoold thee on the left syde. And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow wisely from all swich manere peple as I have seyde bifore, and hem and hir conseil eschewe.

ANdafter this, thanne shul ye kepe yow in swich manere, that for any presumpcioun of youre strengthe, that ye ne dispise nat ne acounte nat the myght of youre adversarie so litel, that ye lete the keepyng of youre persone for youre presumpcioun; for every wys man dredeth his enemy; and Salomon seith, *Weful is he that of alle hath drede; for certes, he that thurgh the hardynesse of his herte, & thurgh the hardynesse of hymself, hath to greet presumpcioun, hym shal yvel bityde*. Thanne shul ye everemoore cowntre-wayte embusshements & alle espaille. For Senec seith: that The wiseman that dredeth harmes escheweth harmes; ne he ne fall-eth into perils that perils escheweth. And, albeit so that it seme that thou art in siker place, yet shaltow alwey do thy diligence in keepyng of thy persone; this is to seyn, ne be nat negligent to kepe thy persone; nat oonly fro thy gretteste enemys, but fro thy leeste enemy. Senek seith, *A man that is wel avysed, he dredeth his leeste enemye*. Ovyde seith: that The litel wele wol slee the grete boile and the wilde hert. And the book seith, *A litel thorn may prikke a greet kyng ful soore; and an hound wol holde the wilde boor*.

BUT natheles, I sey nat thou shalt be so coward, that thou doute ther wher, as is no drede. The book seith: that Somme folk han greet lust to deceyve, but yet they dreden hem to be deceyved. Yet shaltow drede to been empoisoned, & kepe yow from the compaignye of scorneres; for the book seith, *With scorneres make no compaignye, but fleehire wordes as venym*.

OW as to the seconde point; whereas youre wise conseilours conseyllid yow to warnestooore youre hous with greet diligence, I wolde fayn knowe, how that ye understonde thilke wordes, and what is youre sentence.

MELIBEEUS answerde and seyde, *Certes, I understonde it in this wise: That I shal warnestooore myn hous with toures, swiche as han castelles and othere manere edifices, and armure & artelries, by whiche thynges I may my persone & myn hous so kepen & defenden, that myne enemys shul been in drede myn hous for to approche*.

This sentence answerde anon Prudence, *Warnestoooryng, quod she, of heighe toures and of grete edifices appertaineth somtyme to pryde; and eek men make heighe toures and grete edifices with grete costages and with greet travaille; and whan that they been accompliced, yet be they nat worth a stree, but if they be defended by trewe freendes that been olde &*

wise. And understood wel, that the gretteste and strongeste garnyson that a riche man may have, as wel to kepen his persone as his goodes, is that he be biloved amonges his subgets and with his neighobores; for thus seith Tullius: that Ther is a manere garnysoun that no man may venquyse of his citezens and of his peple.

OW sere, as to the thridde point; whereas youre olde and wise conseilours seyden, that yow ne oughte nat sodeynly ne hastily proceden in this nede, but that yowoghte purveyen and apparailen yow in this caas with greet diligence and greet deliberacioun; trewely, I trowe that they seyden right wisely & right sooth, for Tullius seith, *In every nede, or thou bigynne it, apparaille thee with greet diligence*. Thanne seye I, that in vengeance/takyng, in werre, in bataille, and in warnestoooryng, er thou bigynne, I rede that thou apparaille thee therto, and do it with greet deliberacioun; for Tullius seith, that *Longe apparaillyng biforn the bataille maketh short victorie*. And Casidorus seith, *The garnyson is stronger whan it is longe tyme avysed*.

BUT now lat us speken of the conseil that was accorded by youre neighobores, swiche as doon yow reverence withouten love, youre olde enemys reconseyllid, youre flatereres, that conseyllid yow certeyne thynges prively, and openly conseylliden yow the contrarie; the yonge folk also, that conseylliden yow to venge yow, and make werre anon. And certes, sere, as I have seyde biforn, ye han greetly erred to han cleped swich manere folk to youre conseil; which conseilours been ynogh reprevyd by the resouns aforesayd.

BUT natheles, lat us now descende to the special. Ye shuln first procede after the doctrine of Tullius. Certes, the trouthe of this matiere, or of this conseil, nedeth nat diligently enquire; for it is wel wist whiche they been that han doon to yow this trespas and vileynye, and how manye trespasours, and in what manere they han to yow doon al this wrong and al this vileynye. And after this, thanne shul ye examyne the seconde condicioun which that the same Tullius addeth in this matiere. For Tullius put a thyng which that he clepeth Consentynge, this is to seyn; who been they, and how manye, and whiche been they, that consenteden to thy conseil, in thy wilfulnesse to doon hastif vengeance. And lat us considere also who been they, & how manye been they, & whiche been they, that consenteden to youre adversaries. And certes, as to the firste poynt, it is wel known whiche folk been they that consenteden

to youre hastif wilfulnesse; for trewely, alle tho that conseylliden yow to maken sodeyn werre, ne been nat youre freendes.

IC us now considere whiche been they that ye holde so greetly youre freendes as to youre persone; for albeit so that ye be myghty and riche, certes, ye ne been nat but al lone. For certes, ye ne han no child but a doghter; ne ye ne han bretheren, ne cosyns germainys, ne noon oother neigh kynrede, wherfore that youre enemys, for drede, sholde stinte to plede with yow, or to destroye youre persone. Ye knowen also, that youre richesses mooten been dispendid in diverse parties; and whan that every wight hath his part, they ne wollen taken but litel reward to venge thy deeth. But thyne enemys been thre, and they han manie children, bretheren, cosyns, and oother ny kynrede; & though so were that thou hadde slayn of hem two or thre, yet dwellen ther ynowe to wreken hir deeth, and to sle thy persone. And though so be that youre kynrede be moore siker and stedefast than the kyn of youre adversarie, yet natheles, youre kynrede nys but a fer kynrede; they been but litel syb to yow, and the kyn of youre enemys been ny syb to hem; and certes, as in that, hir condicioun is bet than yours.

HANNE lat us considere also of the conseylling of hem that conseylliden yow to taken sodeyn vengeance, wheither it accorde to resoun. And certes, ye knowe wel Nay. For as by right & resoun, ther may no man taken vengeance on no wight, but the juge that hath the jurisdiction of it, whan it is graunted hym to take thilke vengeance, hastily or attemptely, as the lawe requireth. And yet mooreover, of thilke word that Tullius clepeth Consentynge, thou shalt considere if thy myght and thy power may consenten and suffise to thy wilfulnesse and to thy conseilours. And certes, thou mayst wel seyn that Nay. For sikerly, as for to speke proprely, we may do nothing, but oonly swich thyng as we may doon rightfully; and certes, rightfully ne mowe ye take no vengeance, as of youre propre auctoritee.

HANNE mowe ye seen that youre power ne consenteth nat ne accordeth nat with youre wilfulnesse.

IC us now examyne the thridde point, that Tullius clepeth Consequent. Thou shalt understonde that the vengeance that thou purposest for to take is the consequent; & therof folweth another vengeance, peril, & werre; & othere damages withoute nombre, of whiche we be nat war as at this tyme. And as touchyng the fourthe point, that Tullius clepeth

Engendryng, thou shalt considere, that this wrong which that is doon to thee is engendred of the hate of thyne enemys; & of the vengeance/takyng upon that, wolde engendre another vengeance, & muchel sorwe and wastynge of richesses, as I seyde.

OW sere, as to the point that Tullius clepeth Causes, which that is the laste point, thou shalt understonde that the wrong that thou hast receyved hath certeyne causes, whiche that clerkes clepen Oriens and Efficiens, & Causa longinqua and Causa propinqua; this is to seyn, the fer cause and the ny cause. The fer cause is Almyghty God, that is cause of alle thynges; the neer cause is thy thre enemys. The cause accidental was hate; the cause material been the fyve woundes of thy doghter. The cause formal is the manere of hir werkynge, that broghten ladders & cloumben in at thy wyndowes. The cause final was for to slee thy doghter; it letted nat inasmuche as in hem was.

BUT for to speken of the fer cause, as to what ende they shul come, or what shal finally bityde of hem in this caas, ne kan I nat deme but by conjectyng and by supposyng. For we shul suppose that they shul come to a wikked ende, bycause that the Book of Decrees seith, *Seelden, or with greet peyne, been causes ybrought to good ende whanne they been baddely bigonne*.

OW sere, if men wolde axe me, why that God suffred men to do yow this vileynye, certes, I kan nat wel answer as for no soothfastnesse; for thapostle seith, that the Sciences and the juggements of oure Lord God Almyghty been ful depe, ther may no man comprehend ne serchen hem suffisantly. Natheles, by certeyne presumpciouns and conjectynges, I holde and bileve, that God, which that is ful of justice & of rightwisnesse, hath suffred this bityde by juste cause resonable.

HY name is Melibee, this is to seyn, *A man that drynketh hony. Thou hast ydronke so muchel hony of sweete temporel richesses, and delices and honours of this world, that thou art dronken, and hast forgeten Jhesu Crist, thy creatour; thou ne hast nat doon to hym swich honour and reverence as thee oughte; ne thou ne hast nat wel ytaken kepe to the wordes of Ovide, that seith, Under the hony of the goodes of the body is hyd the venym that sleeth the soule*. And Salomon seith, *If thou hast founden hony, etc of it that suffiseth; for if thou etc of it out of mesure, thou shalt spewe, and be neddy and povre*. And peraventure Crist hath thee in despit, and hath turned away

fro thee his face and his eeris of misericorde; and also he hath suffred that thou hast been punysshed in the manere that thou hast ytrespassed. Thou hast doon synne agayn oure Lord Crist; for certes, the thre enemys of mankynde, that is to seyn, the flesh, the feend & the world, thou hast suffred hem entre into thy herte wilfully by the wyndowes of thy body, and hast nat defended thyself suffisantly agayns hire assautes & hire temptaciouns, so that they han wounded thy soule in five places; this is to seyn, the deadly synnes that been entred into thy herte by thy five wittes. And in the same manere oure Lord Crist hath woold and suffred, that thy thre enemys been entred into thy hous by the wyndowes, & han ywounded thy doghter in the foreseyde manere.

CERTES, quod Melibee, I se wel that ye enforce yow muchel by wordes to overcome me in swich manere, that I shal nat venge me of myne enemys; shewyng me the perils and the yvels that myghten falle of this vengeance. But whoso wolde considere in alle vengeance the perils and yvels that myghte sewe of vengeance; takyng, a man wolde nevere take vengeance, & that were harm; for by the vengeance takyng been the wikked men disseyvered fro the goode men. And they that han wyl to do wikkednesse restreine hir wikked purpos, whan they seen the punysshynge and chastisynge of the trespassours.

AND to this answerde dame Prudence: Certes, seyde she, I graunte wel that of vengeance cometh muchel yvel and muchel goode; but vengeance takyng aperteneth nat unto everichoon, but only unto juges, & unto hem that han jurisdiction upon the trespassours.

AND yet seye I moore; that right as a singuler persone synneth in takyng vengeance of another man, right so synneth the juge if he do no vengeance of hem that it han disserved; for Senec seith thus. That maister, he seith, is good that proveth shrewes. And, as Cassidore seith. A man dredeth to do outrages whan he woot and knoweth that it displeth to the juges & sovereyns. And another seith. The juge that dredeth to do right, maketh men shrewes. And Seint Paule the apostle seith in his epistle, whan he writeth unto the Romayns: that. The juges beren nat the spere withouten cause; but they beren it to punyssh the shrewes and mysdoers, & for to defende the goode men. If ye wol thanne take vengeance of youre enemys, ye shul retourne or have youre recours to the juge that hath the jurisdiction upon hem; and he shal punyssh hem

as the lawe axeth and requireth.

A QUOD Melibee, this vengeance liketh me no thyng. I biithenke me now and take heede, how fortune hath norissed me fro my childhede, and hath holpen me to passe many a stroong paas. Now wol I assayen hire, trowyng, with Goddes helpe, that she shal help me my shame for to venge.

CERTES, quod Prudence, if ye wol werke by my conseil, ye shul nat assaye fortune by nowy; ne ye shul nat lene or bowe unto hire, after the word of Senec: for Thynges that been folly doon, and that been in hope of fortune, shullen nevere come to good ende. And, as the same Senec seith. The moore cleer and the moore shynyng that fortune is, the moore brotil and the sonner broken she is. Trusteth nat in hire, for she nys nat stidefaste ne stable; for whan thou trowest to be moost seur or siker of hire helpe, she wol faille thee and deceyve thee. And whereas ye seyn that fortune hath norissed yow fro youre childhede, I seye, that in so muchel shul ye the lasse truste in hire and in hir wit; for Senec seith. What man that is norissed by fortune she maketh hym a greet fool. Now thanne, syn ye desire and axe vengeance, and the vengeance that is doon after the lawe and bfore the juge ne liketh yow nat, and the vengeance that is doon in hope of fortune is perilous and uncertein, thanne have ye noon oother remedie, but for to have youre recours unto the sovereyn juge that vengeth alle vileynnes and wronges; and he shal venge yow after that hymself witnesseth, whereas he seith. Leveth the vengeance to me, and I shal do it.

MELIBEE answerde, If I ne venge me nat of the vileynne that men han doon to me, I sompne or warne hem that han doon to me that vileynne and alle othere, to do me another vileynne; for it is writen. If thou take no vengeance of an oold vileynne, thou sompnest thyne adversaries to do thee a new vileynne. And also, for my suffrance, men wolden do to me so muchel vileynne, that I myghte neither bere it ne susteine; and so sholde I been put and holden over lowe, for men seyn. In muchel suffryng shul manye thynges falle unto thee whiche thou shalt nat mowe suffre.

CERTES, quod Prudence, I graunte yow that overmuchel suffraunce nys nat good; but yet ne folweth it nat therof, that every persone to whom men doon vileynne take of it vengeance; for that aperteneth & longeth also only to the juges, for they shul venge the vileynnes and in-

juries. And therefore tho two auctoritees that ye han seyde above, been oonly understonden in the juges; for whan they suffren over muchel the wronges and the vileynnes to be doon withouten punysshynge, they sompne nat a man al oonly for to do newe wronges, but they comanden it. Also, a wys man seith: that The juge that correcteth nat the synnere, comandeth & biddeth hym do synne. And the juges & sovereyns myghten in hir land so muchel suffre of the shrewes and mysdoers, that they sholden by swich suffrance, by proces of tyme, wexen of swich power & myght, that they sholden putte out the juges & the sovereyns from hir places, and atte laste maken hem lesen hire lordshipes.

AT lat us now putte, that ye have leve to venge yow. I seye ye been nat of myght & power as now to venge yow. for if ye wole maken comparisoun unto the myght of youre adversaries, ye shul fynde in manye thynges, that I have shewed yow er this, that hire condicioun is bettre than yowres; and therefore seye I, that it is good as now that ye suffre and be pacient.

FORTHERMOORE, ye knowen wel that, after the comune sawe, It is a woodnesse a man to stryve with a stronger or a moore myghty man than he is hymself; & for to stryve with a man of evene strengthe that is to seyn, with as stronge a man as he, it is peril; and for to stryve with a weyker man, it is folie; and therefore sholde a man flee stryvyng as muchel as he myghte. for Salomon seith. It is a greet worshippe to a man to kepen hym fro noyse & stryf. And if it so bifalle or happe that a man of gretter myght and strengthe than thou art do thee grevaunce, studie & bisye thee rather to stille the same grevaunce, than for to venge thee; for Senec seith that. He putteth hym in greet peril that stryvet with a gretter man than he is hymself. And Catoun seith. If a man of hyer estat or degree, or moore myghty than thou, do thee any or grevaunce, suffre hym; for he that oones hath greved thee, another tyme may relieve thee and helpe.

ET sette I caas, ye have bothe myght and licence for to venge yow; I seye that ther be fulmany thynges that shul restreine yow of vengeance takyng, and make yow for to encline to suffre, and for to han pacience in the thynges that han been doon to yow. first and foreward, if ye wole considere the defautes that been in youre owene persone, for whiche defautes God hath suffred yow have this tribulacioun, as I have seyde yow heer bifore; for the poete seith, that We oghte paciently taken the tribulacions that comen to us, whan we thynken and consideren that we

han disserved to have hem. And Seint Gregorie seith: that Whan a man considereth wel the nombre of his defautes and of his synnes, the peynes and the tribulaciouns that he suffreth semen the lesse unto hym; & inasmuche as hym thynketh his synnes moore hevye and grevous, inasmuche semeth his peyne the lighter, & the esier unto him.

AL SO ye owen to encline and bowe youre herte to take the pacience of oure Lord Jhesu Crist, as seith Seint Peter in his epistles: Jhesu Crist, he seith, hath suffred for us and yeven ensample to every man to folwe & sewe hym; for he dide nevere synne, ne nevere cam ther a vileynous word out of his mouth; whan men cursed hym, he cursed hem noght; and whan men betten hym, he manaced hem noght. Also the grete pacience which the seintes that been in paradys han had in tribulaciouns that they han suffred, withouten hir desert or gilt, oghte muchel stiren yow to pacience. forthermoore, ye sholde enforce yow to have pacience, consideryng that the tribulaciouns of this world but lifel while endure, and soone passed been and goone; & the joye that a man seketh to have by pacience in tribulaciouns is perdurable; after that the Apostle seith in his epistle: The joye of God, he seith, is perdurable, that is to seyn, everelastyng.

AL SO troweth & bileveth stedefastly, that he nys nat wel ynorissed, ne wel ytaught, that kan nat have pacience, or wol nat receyve pacience. for Salomon seith: that The doctrine & the wit of a man is knowen by pacience. And in another place he seith: that He that is pacient governeth hym by greet prudence. And the same Salomon seith. The angry and wrathful man maketh noyses, and the pacient man attempreth hem and stilleth. He seith also: It is moore worth to be pacient, than for to be right strong; & he that may have the lordshipe of his owene herte is moore to preyse than he that by his force or strengthe taketh grete citees; and therefore seith Seint Jame in his epistle: that Pacience is a greet vertu of perfeccioun.

CERTES, quod Melibee, I graunte yow, dame Prudence, that pacience is a greet vertu of perfeccioun; but every man may nat have the perfeccioun that ye seken; ne I nam nat of the nombre of right parfite men, for myn herte may nevere been in pees unto the tyme it be venged. And albeit so that it was greet peril to myn enemys to do me a vileynne in takyng vengeance upon me, yet taken they noon heede of the peril, but fulfilleden hir wikked wyl, and hir corage. And ther-

fore, methynketh men oghten nat reprove me, though I putte me in a litel peril for to venge me, and though I do a greet excesse, that is to seyn, that I venge oon outrage by another.

QUOD dame Prudence, ye seyn youre wyl and as yow liketh; but in no caas of the world a man sholde nat doon outrage ne excesse for to vengen hym: for Cassidore seith: that As yuele dooth he that vengeth hym by outrage, as he that dooth the outrage; and therefore, ye shul venge yow after the ordre of right, that is to seyn, by the lawe, and noght by excesse ne by outrage. And also, if ye wol venge yow of the outrage of youre adversaries in oother manere than right comandeth, ye synnen; & therfore seith Senec: that A man shal never vengen shrewednesse by shrewednesse. And if ye seye, that right axeth a man to defenden violence by violence, and fightyng by fightyng, certes, ye seye sooth, whan the defense is doon anon withouten interalle or withouten taryng or delay, for to defenden hym and nat for to vengen hym. And it bihoveth that a man putte swich attemperance in his defense, that men have no cause ne matiere to reprevyn hym that defendeth hym of excesse and outrage; for ellis were it agayn resoun. Pardee, ye knowen wel, that ye maken no defense as now for to defende yow, but for to venge yow; and so seweth it that ye han no wyl to do youre dede attemprely. And therfore, methynketh that pacience is good, for Salomon seith: that he that is nat pacient shal have greet harm.

CERTES, quod Melibee, I graunte yow, that whan a man is impacient and wrooth, of that that toucheth hym noght and that aperteneth nat unto hym, though it harme hym, it is no wonder, for the lawe seith that he is coupable that entremetteth or medleth with swich thyng as aperteneth nat unto hym. And Salomon seith, that he that entremetteth hym of the noyse or strif of another man, is lyk to hym that taketh an hound by the eris, for right as he that taketh a straunge hound by the eris is outherville biten with the hound, right in the same wise is it resoun that he have harm, that by his impacience medleth hym of the noyse of another man, whereas it aperteneth nat unto hym. But ye knowen wel that this dede, that is to seyn, my grief and my disese, toucheth meright ny; and therefore, though I be wrooth & impacient, it is no merveille. And, savyngge youre grace, I kan nat seen that it myghte greetly harme me though I tooke vengeance; for I am richer and moore myghty than myne enemys been. And wel knowen ye, that by moneye & by havynge grete possessions

been alle the thynges of this world governed; and Salomon seith: that Alle thynges obeyen to moneye.

WHAN Prudence hadde herd his riches and of his moneye, dispreysynge the power of his adversaries, she spak, and seyde in this wise. Certes, deere sire, I graunte yow that ye been riche and myghty, and that the riches been goode to hem that han wel yeten hem and wel konne usen hem. For right as the body of a man may nat lyven withoute the soule, namoore may it lyve withoute temporel goodes; and by riches may a man gete hym grete freendes. And therfore seith Pamphilus. If a netherdes doghter, seith he, be riche, she may chesen of a thousand men which she wol take to hir housbonde; for, of a thousand men, con wol nat forsaken hire ne refusen hire. And this Pamphilus seith also. If thou be right happy, that is to seyn, if thou be right riche, thou shalt fynde a greet nombre of felawes & freendes. And if thy fortune change that thou wexe povre, farewell freendshipe & felaweshipe; for thou shalt be al alloone withouten any compaignye, but if it be the compaignye of povre folk. And yet seith this Pamphilus moreover: that They that been thralle and bonde of lynage shullen been maad worthy & noble by the riches. And right so as by riches ther comen manye goodes, right so by povert come ther manye harmes and yveles; for greet povert constreyneth a man to do manye yveles. And therfore clepeth Cassidore povert the mooder of ruyne; that is to seyn, the mooder of overthrowng or fallynge down. And therfore seith Piers Alforce. Oon of the gretteste adversities of this world is whan a free man, by kynde or by burthe, is constreyned by povert to eten the almesse of his enemy. And the same seith Innocent in oon of his bookes, he seith: that Sorweful and myshappy is the condicioun of a povre beggere, for if he axe nat his mete he dyeth for hunger; and if he axe, he dyeth for shame; and algates necessitee constreyneth hym to axe. And therfore seith Salomon: that Bet it is to dye than for to have swich povert. And as the same Salomon seith. Betre it is to dye of bitter deeth than for to lyven in swich wise. By thise reasons that I have seid unto yow, and by manye othere reasons that I koude seye, I graunte yow that riches been goode to hem that geten hem wel, and to hem that wel usen tho riches. And therfore wol I shewe yow how ye shul have yow, & how ye shul bere yow in gaderyng of riches, and in what manere ye shul usen hem.

FIRST, ye shul geten hem without en greet desir, by good leyser, sokyngly, & nat over hastily; for a man that is to desiryngge to gete riches a-baundoneth hym first to thefte, & to alle other yveles. And therfore seith Salomon. He that hasteth hym to bisily to wexe riche shal be noon innocent. He seith also: that The riches that hastily cometh fro a man; but that riches that cometh litel and litel, wexeth alwey & multiplieth. And sire, ye shul geten riches by youre wit & by youre travaille unto youre profit; & that withouten wrong or harm/doyngge to any oother persone. For the lawe seith: that Ther maketh no man himselfen riche, if he do harm to another wight: this is to seyn, that nature defendeth and forbedeth by right, that no man make himselfe riche unto the harm of another persone. And Tullius seith: that No sorwe, ne no drede of deeth, ne nothing that may falle unto a man, is so muchel agayns nature, as a man to encressen his owene profit to the harm of another man. And though the grete men and the myghty men geten riches moore lightly than thou, yet shaltou nat been ydel ne slow to do thy profit; for thou shalt in alle wise flee ydelnesse; for Salomon seith: that Ydelnesse techeth a man to do manye yveles. And the same Salomon seith: that he that travaileth & bisith hym to tilien his land, shal eeten breed; but he that is ydel and casteth hym to no bisynesse ne occupacioun, shal falle into povert, and dye for hunger. And he that is ydel and slow, kan never fynde covenable tyme for to doon his profit. For ther is a verysifour seith: that The ydel man excuseth hym in wynter, bycause of the grete coold; and in somer, by enchesoun of the heete. For thise causes seith Caton. Maketh and enclyneth nat yow overmuchel for to slepe; for overmuchel reste norisseth and causeth manye vices. And therefore seith Seint Jerome: Dooth somme goode dedes, that the devel, which is oure enemy, ne fynde yow nat unoccupied. For the devel ne taketh nat lightly unto his werkynge swiche as he fyndeth occupied in goode werkes.

WHANNE thus in getyngge riches, ye mosten flee ydelnesse; and afterward ye shul use the riches, which ye have geten by youre wit & by youre travaille, in swich a manere, that men holden nat yow to scars, ne to sparyngge, ne to fool-large; that is to seyn, overlarge a spendere. For right as men blamen an avaricious man bycause of his scarsetee and chyncherie, in the same wise is he to blame that spendeth overlargely. And therfore seith Caton. Use, he seith, thy riches that thou

hast geten in swich a manere, that men have no matiere ne cause to calle thee neither wrecche ne chynche; for it is a greet shame to a man to have a povere herte and a riche purs. He seith also: The goodes that thou hast ygeten, use hem by mesure, that is to seyn, spende hem mesurably; for they that folily wasten & despenden the goodes that they han, whan they han namoore propre of hir owene, they shapen hem to take the goodes of another man.

USE ye thanne, that ye shul flee avarice; usynge youre riches in swich manere, that men seyen nat that youre riches been yburied, but that ye have hem in youre myght & in youre weeldyngge. For a wysman repreth the avaricious man, and seith thus, in two vers. Wherto and why buryeth a man his goodes by his grete avarice, and knoweth wel that nedes mooste he dye; for deeth is the ende of every man, as in this present lyf. And for what cause or enchesoun joyneth he hym, or knytteth he hym, so faste unto his goodes, that alle his wittes mowen nat disseveren hym or departen hym from his goodes; & knoweth wel, or oghte knowe, that whan he is deed he shal nothing bere with hym out of this world. And therfore seith Seint Augustyn: that The avaricious man is likened unto helle; that the moore it swelweth, the moore desir it hath to swelwe and devoure. And as wel as ye wolde eschewe to be called an avaricious man or chynche, as wel sholde ye kepe yow and governe yow in swich a wise that men calle yow nat fool-large. Therfore seith Tullius. The goodes, he seith, of thyn hous ne sholde nat been hyd, ne kept so cloos but that they myght been opened by pitee & debonairetee; that is to seyn, to yeven part to hem that han greet nede; Ne thy goodes shullen nat been so opene, to been every mannes goodes.

AFTERWARD, in getyngge of youre riches & in usynge hem, ye shul alwey have thre thynges in youre herte; that is to seyn, oure Lord God, conscience, and good name. first, ye shul have God in youre herte; and for no riches ye shullen do nothyng, which may in any manere displese God, that is youre creatour and makere; for after the word of Salomon. It is bettre to have a litel good with the love of God, than to have muchel good & tresour, and lese the love of his Lord God. And the prophete seith: that Betre it is to been a good man and have litel good and tresour, than to been holden a shrewe, & have grete riches. And yet seye I ferthermore, that ye sholde alwey doon youre bisynesse to gete yow riches, so that ye gete hem with good conscience. And tha postle seith:

that Ther nys thyng in this world, of which we sholden have so greet joye as whan oure conscience bereth us good witness; & the wise man seith: The substance of a man is ful good, whan synne is nat in mannes conscience.

AFTERWARD, in getyng of youre riches, and in usynge of hem, yow moste have greet bisynesse & greet diligence, that youre goode name be alwey kept & conserved. for Salomon seith: that Bettre it is and moore it availleth a man to have a good name, than for to have grete riches. And therfore he seith in another place: Do greet diligence, seith Salomon, in keepyng of thy freend and of thy goode name, for it shal lenger abide with thee than any tresour, be it never so precious. And certes, he sholde nat be called a gentilman, that after God and good conscience, alle thynges left, ne dooth his diligence and bisynesse to kepen his good name. And Cassidore seith: that It is signe of gentil herte, whan a man loveth and desireth to han a good name. And therfore seith Seint Augustyn: that Ther been two thynges that are necessarie and nedefulle, & that is, good conscience and good loos: that is to seyn, good conscience to thyn owne persone inward, and good loos for thyneighbore outward. And he that trusteth hym so muchel in his goode conscience, that he displeth and setteth nat nocht his goode name or loos, & rekketh nocht though he kepe nat his goode name, nys but a cruel chere.

SIRE, now have I shewed yow how ye shul do in getyng riches, & how ye shullen usen hem; & I se wel, that for the trust that ye han in youre riches, ye wole moeve werre & bataille. I conseil yow, that ye bigynne no werre in trust of youre riches; for they ne suffisen nocht werres to mayntene. And therfore seith a philosophe, That man that desireth & wole algates han werre, shal never have suffisaunce; for the richer that he is, the gretter despenses moste he make, if he wole have worship & victorie. And Salomon seith: that The gretter riches that a man hath, the mo despendours he hath. And, deere sire, albeit so that for youre riches ye mowe have muchel folk, yet bihoveth it nat, ne it is nat good to bigynne werre, whereas ye mowe in oother manere have pees, unto youre worship and profit. for the victories of batailles that been in this world, lyen nat in greet nombre or multitude of the peple, ne in the vertu of man; but it lith in the wyl & in the hand of oure Lord God Almyghty.

AND therfore Judas Machabeus, which was Goddes knyght, whan he sholde fighte agayn his adversarie that hadde a greet nombre, and a gretter multitude of folk & stronger than was this peple of Machabee, yet here comforted his litel compaignye, & seyde right in this wise: Als lightly, quod he, may oure Lord God Almyghty yeve victorie to a fewe folk as to many folk, for the victorie of a bataille comth nat by the grete nombre of peple, but it come from oure Lord God of heven.

AND deere sire, for as muchel as ther is no man certein, if he be worthy that God yeve hym victorie, namore than he is certein whether he be worthy of the love of God or naught, after that Salomon seith, therfore every man sholde greetly drede werres to bigynne. And bycause that in batailles fallen manye perils, & hapeth outhere while that as soone is the grete man slayn as the litel man; and, as it is writen in the seconde book of Kynges, The dedes of batailles been aventureuse & nothyng certeyne; for as lightly is oon hurt with a spere as another. And for ther is gret peril in werre, therfore sholde a man fle and eschue werre, in as muchel as a man may goodly; for Salomon seith: He that loveth peril shal falle in peril.

ASPOKEN in this manere, Melibee answered, and seyde, I see wel, dame Prudence, that by youre faire wordes, and by youre resouns that ye han shewed me, that the werre liketh yow nothyng; but I have nat yet herd youre conseil, how I shal do in this nece.

CERTES, quod she, I conseil yow that ye accorde with youre adversaries, and that ye have pees with hem; for Seint Jame seith, in his epistles, that By concord & pees the smale riches wexen grete, and by debaat and discord the grete riches fallen down; and ye knowen wel that oon of the gretteste and moost sovereyn thyng that is in this world, is unyte & pees. And therfore seyde oure Lord Jhesu Crist to his apostles in this wise: Wel happy and blessed been they that loven and purchacen pees; for they been called children of God.

A QUOD Melibee, now se I wel that ye loven nat myn honour ne myn worship. Ye knowen wel that myne adversaries han bigonnen this debaat and bryge by hire outrage; and ye se wel that they ne requeren ne preyen me nat of pees, ne they asken nat to be reconciled. Alas, thanne that I go and meke me and obere me to hem, and crie hem mercy? forsothe, that were nat myn worship; for right as men seyn, that Overgreet humylnesse en-

gendreth dispreysynge, so fareth it by to greet humylnesse or mekenesse.

MELIBEE bigan dame Prudence to maken semblant of wrathe, and seyde, Certes, sire, sauf youre grace, I love youre honour and your profit as I do myn owne, and evere have doon; ne ye, ne noon oother, syen nevere the contrarie. And yit, if I hadde seyde that ye sholde han purchaced the pees and the reconsiliacioun, I ne hadde nat muchel mys-taken me, ne seyde amys; for the wise man seith, The dissensioun bigynneth by another man, and thereconsilyng bygynneth by thyself. And the prophete seith, flee shrewednesse & do goodnesse; seke pees and folwe it, as muchel as in thee is. Yetseye I nat that yeshul rather pursue to youre adversaries for pees than they shuln to yow; for I knowe wel that ye been so hardherted, that ye wold do nothyng for me; and Salomon seith, He that hath overhard an herte, atte laste he shal myshappe and mystyde.

MELIBEE hadde herd dame Prudence maken semblant of wrathe, he seyde in this wise: Dame, I prey yow that ye be nat displeased of thynges that I seye; for ye knowe wel that I am angry and wrooth, and that is no wonder; & they that been wrothe witen nat wel what they doon, ne what they seyn. Therfore the prophete seith: that Troubled eyen han no cleersighte. Butseye, eth and conseil me as yow liketh; for I am redy to do right as ye wol desire; and if ye repreve me of my folye, I am the moore holden to love yow and to preysse yow; for Salomon seith: that He that repreveth hym that dooth folye, he shal fynde gretter grace than he that deceyveth hym by sweete wordes.

MELIBEE seyde dame Prudence, I make no semblant of wrathe ne anger but for youre grete profit; for Salomon seith, He is moore worth, that repreveth or chideth a fool for his folye, shewyng hym semblant of wrathe, than he that supporteth hym and preyseth hym in his mysdoynge, & laugheth at his folye. And this same Salomon seith afterward: that By the sorweful visage of a man, that is to seyn, by the sory & hevvy countenance of a man, The fool correcteth & amendeth hymself.

MELIBEE seyde Melibee, I shal nat konne answer to so manye faire resouns as ye putten to me & shewen. Seyeth shortly youre wyl & youre conseil, and I am al redy to fulfille and parfourne it.

MELIBEE dame Prudence discovered al hir wyl to hym, & seyde, I conseil yow, quod she, aboven alle thynges, that ye make pees bitwene God and yow; and beth reconciled unto hym and to his grace; for as I have seyde yow heerbefore, God hath suffred yow to have this tribulacioun and disese for youre synnes. And if ye do as I sey yow, God wol sende youre adversaries unto yow, and maken hem fallen at youre feet, redy to do youre wyl and youre comandements. for Salomon seith, Whan the condicioun of man is plesant & likyng to God, he chaungeth the hertes of the mannes adversaries and constreyneth hem to biseken hym of pees and of grace. And I prey yow, lat me speke with youre adversaries in privee place; for they shul nat knowe that it be of youre wyl or youre assent; and thanne, whan I knowe hir wil and hire entente, I may conseil yow the moore seurely.

DAAME, quod Melibee, dooth youre wil & youre likyng, for I putte me hoolly in youre disposicioun & ordinaunce. Thanne dame Prudence, whan she saugh the goode wyl of hir housbonde, delibered and took avys in hirself, thinkyng how she myghte bryng this nece unto a good conclusioun and to a good ende. And whan she saugh hir tyme, she sente for thise adversaries to come unto hire into a pryvee place, and shewed wisely unto hem the grete goodes that comen of pees, and the grete harmes and perils that been in werre; and seyde to hem in a goodly manere hou that hem oughten have greet repentance of the injurie and wrong that they hadden doon to Melibee hir lord, & to hire, and to hire doghter.

AND whan they herden the goodliche wordes of dame Prudence, they weren so supprised and ravysshed, & hadden so greet joye of hire, that wonder was to telle. Alas, lady, quod they, ye han shewed unto us The blessyng of swetnesse, after the sawe of David the prophete; for the reconsilyng which we been nat worthy to have in no manere, but we oghte requeren it with greet contricioun & humylnesse, ye, of youre grete goodnesse, have presented unto us. Now se we wel that the science & the konnyng of Salomon is ful trewe; for he seith: that Sweete wordes multiplen & encreesen freendes, and maken shrewes to be debonaire and meke.

CERTES, quod they, we putten oure dede, and al oure matere and cause, al hoolly in youre goode wyl; and been redy to obeye to the speche and comandement of my lord Melibee. And therfore, deere & benygne lady, we preien yow and biseke yow as mekely as we konne

and mowen, that it lyke unto youre grete goodnesse to fulfillen in dede youre goodliche wordes; for we consideren & knoweliche that we han offended and greved my lord Melibee out of mesure; so ferforth, that we be nat of power to maken his amendes; & therfore we oblige and bynden us and oure freendes to doon al his wyl & his comandements. But peraventure he hath swich hevynesse and swich wrathe to usward bycause of oure offense, that he wole enioyne us swich a peyne as we mowe nat bere ne susteine; and therfore, noble lady, we biseke to youre wommanly pitee, to taken swich avysement in this nede, that we, ne oure freendes, be nat desherited ne destroyed thurgh oure folye.

CERTES, quod Prudence, it is an hard thyng and right perilous, that a man putte hym al outrely in the arbitracioun and juggement, & in the myght & power of his enemys; for Salomon seith, *Leeveth me, and yeveth credence to that I shal seyn; I seye, quod he, ye peple, folk, and governours of hooly chirche, to thy sone, to thy wyf, to thy freend, ne to thy broother, ne yeve thou nevere myght ne maistrie of thy body, whil thou lyvest.*

NOW sithen he defendeth that man shal nat yeven to his broother, ne to his freend, the myght of his body, by stronger resoun he defendeth and forbedeth a man to yeven hymself to his enemy. And natheless I conseilte you, that ye mystruste nat my lord; for I woot wel and knowe verraily, that he is debonaire and meeke, large, curteys, and nothyng desirous ne covetous of good ne riches; for ther nys nothyng in this world that he desireth, save oonly worshipe & honour. Forthermoore I knowe wel, and am right seur, that he shal nothyng doon in this nede withouten my conseil. And I shal so werken in this cause that, by grace of oure Lord God, ye shul been reconciled unto us.

THANNE seyden they with o voys, *Worshipful lady, we putten us and oure goodes al fully in youre wil and disposicioun; & been redy to comen, what day that it like unto youre noblesse to ly-myte us or assigne us, for to maken oure obligacioun & boond as strong as it liketh unto youre goodnesse; that we mowe fulfill the wille of yow & of my lord Melibee.*

WHAN dame Prudence hadde herd the answers of these men, she bad hem goon agayn privily; and she retourned to hir lord Melibee, & tolde hym how she foon his adversaries ful repentant, knowelicheyng ful lowely hir synnes and trespas, & how they were redy to suffren al peyne, requirynge and preyynge hym of mercy and pitee.

THANNE seyde Melibee, *He is wel worthy to have pardoun and foryiffnesse of his synne, that excuseth nat his synne, but knoweliche it & repenteth hym, axinge indulgence, for Senec seith, Ther is the remissoun and foryiffnesse, whereas confessioun is; for confessioun is neigheboore to innocence.* And he seith in another place: *He that hath shame for his synne & knoweliche it, is worthy remissoun; & therfore I assente and conferme me to have pees; but it is good that we do it nat withouten the assent & wyl of oure freendes.*

THANNE was Prudence right glad & joyeful, & seyde, Certes, sire, quod she, ye han wel and goodly answered; for right as by the conseil, assent & helpe of youre freendes, ye han been stired to venge yow and maken werre, right so withouten hire conseil shul ye nat accorden yow, ne have pees with youre adversaries; for the lawe seith, *Ther nys nothyng so good by wey of kynde as a thyng to been unbounde by hym that it was ybounde.*

AND thanne dame Prudence, withouten delay or taryng, sente anon hire messages for hire kyn, and for hire olde freendes whiche that were trewe and wyse, and tolde hem by ordre, in the presence of Melibee, al this matere as it is aboven expressed & declared; and preyden hem that they wolde yeven hire avys & conseil what best were to doon in this nede. And whan Melibees freendes hadde taken hire avys and deliberacioun of the forseide matere, and hadden examyned it by greet bisynesse and greet diligence, they yave ful conseil for to have pees and reste; and that Melibee sholde receyve with good herte his adversaries to foryiffnesse and mercy.

AND whan dame Prudence hadde herd the assent of hir lord Melibee, and the conseil of his freendes, accorde with hire wille and hire entencion, she was wonderly glad in hire herte, and seyde: *Ther is an old proverbe, quod she, seith: that the goodnesse that thou mayst do this day, do it, & abide nat ne delaye it nat til tomorwe. And therfore I conseilte that ye sende youre messages, swiche as been discrete and wise, unto youre adversaries; tellynge hem on youre bihalve, that if they wole trete of pees and of accord, that they shape hem, withouten delay or taryng, to comen unto us.* Which thyng parfourned was in dede. And whanne these trespasours and repentyng folk of hire folies, that is to seyn, the adversaries of Melibee, hadden herd what these messagers seyden unto hem, they weren right glad & joyeful, and answered ful mekely and benignely, yeldynge graces & thankynge to hir lord

Melibee & to al his compaignye; & shopen hem, withouten delay to go with the messagers, and obeye to the comandement of hir lord Melibee.

AND right anon they taken hire wey to the court of Melibee, and took en with hem somme of hire trewe freendes to maken feith for hem and for to been hire borwes. And whan they were comen to the presence of Melibee, he seyde hem these wordes: *It standeth thus, quod Melibee, and sooth it is, that ye, causeless, and withouten skile and resoun, han doon and grete injuries and wronges to me and to my wyf Prudence, & to my doghter also. For ye han entred into myn hous by violence, and have doon swich outrage, that alle men known wel that ye have diserved the deeth, and therfore wol I knowe & wite of yow, whether ye wol putte the punyssement & the chastisynge & the vengeance of this outrage in the wyl of me and of my wyf Prudence; or ye wol nat?*

THANNE the wiseste of hem thre answered for hem alle, and seyde, Sire, quod he, we knowen wel that we been unworthy to comen unto the court of so greet a lord, & so worthy as ye been; for we han so greetly mystaken us, & han offended & agilt in swich a wise agayn youre heigh lordshipe, that trewely we han diserved the deeth. But yet for the grete goodnesse and debonairete that al the world witnesseth in youre persone, we submytten us to the excellence and benignitee of youre gracious lordshipe, and been redy to obeie to alle youre comandements; bisekyng yow, that of youre merciable pitee ye wol considere oure grete repentaunce and lowe submyssioun, and graunten us foryevenesse of oure outrageous trespas and offense, for wel we knowe that youre liberal grace and mercy stretchen hem farther in to goodnesse, than doon oure outrageouse giltes & trespas into wikkednesse; albeit that cursedly and dampnably we han agilt agayn youre heigh lordshipe.

THANNE Melibee took hem up fro the ground ful benignely, and receyved hire obligaciouns and hire boondes by hire othes upon hire plegges & borwes, and assigned hem a certeyn day to retourne unto his court, for to accepte and receyve the sentence and juggement that Melibee wolde comande to be doon on hem by the causes aforesayd; whiche thynges ordeyned, every man retourned to his hous.

AND whan that dame Prudence saugh hir tyme, she freyned & axed hir lord Melibee, what vengeance he thoughte to taken of his adversaries.

O which Melibee answerde and seyde, Certes, quod he, I thynke and purpose me fully to desherite hem of al that evere they han, and for to putte hem in exil for evere.

CERTES, quod dame Prudence, this were a cruel sentence, and muchel agayn resoun; for ye been riche ynough, & han no nede of oother mennes good; & ye myghte lightly in this wise gete yow a covetous name, which is a vicious thyng, & oghte been eschued of every good man; for after the sawe of the word of the Apostle, *Covetise is roote of alle harmes.* And therfore it were bettre for yow to lese so muchel good of youre owene, than for to taken of hire good in this manere; for bettre it is to lesen with worshipe, than it is to wynne good with vileynye and shame; and everi man oghte to doon his diligence and his bisynesse to geten hym a good name. And yet shal he nat oonly bisie hym in kepynge of his good name, but he shal also enforcen hym alwey to do somthyng by which he may renouvelle his good name; for it is writen that, *The olde good loos or good name of a man is soone goon and passed, whan it is nat newed ne renovelled.*

AND as touchynge that ye seyn, ye wole exile youre adversaries, that thynketh me muchel agayn resoun and out of mesure, considered the power that they han yeve yow upon hemself. And it is writen, that *He is worthy to lesen his privilege that mysuseth the myght and the power that is yeven hym.* And I sette cas, ye myght enioyne hem that peyne by right and by lawe, which I trowe ye mowe nat do. I seye, ye mighte nat putten it to execucioun peraventure, and thanne were it likly to retourne to the werre as it was bifore; & therfore if ye wole that men do yow obeisance, ye moste deemen moore curteisly; this is to seyn, ye moste yeven moore esy sentences & juggements. For it is writen, that *He that moost curteisly comandeth, to hym men moost obeyen.* And therfore I prey yow that in this necessitee & in this nede, ye caste yow to overcome youre herte. For Senec seith: that *He that overcometh his herte, overcometh twies; and Tullius seith,*

Ther is nothyng so comendable in a greet lord as whan he is debonaire & meeke, and appeseth him lightly. And I prey yow that ye wole forbere now to do vengeance, in swich a manere, that youre goode name may be kept and conserved; and that men mowe have cause & matere to preyse yow of pitee & of mercy, & that ye have no cause to repente yow of thyng that ye doon; for Senec seith, *He overcometh in an yvel manere, that repenteth hym of his victorie.* Wherefore, I pray yow, lat mercy been in

your mynde and in youre herte, to the effect
& entente that God Almyghty have mercy
on yow in his laste juggement; for Seint
Jame seith in his epistle, Juggement
withouten mercy shal be doon to hym, that
hath no mercy of another wight.

WHANNE Melibee hadde herd the
grete skiles & resouns of dame
Prudence, & hire wise informa-
cions and techynges, his herte gan en-
clyn to the wil of his wif, consideryng hir
trewe entente; & conformed hym anon and
assented fully to werken after hir conseil;
and thonked God, of whom procedeth al
vertu and alle goodnesse, that hym sente
a wyf of so greet discrecion.

AND whan the day cam that his
adversaries sholde appieren
in his presence, he spak unto
hem ful goodly, and seyde in
this wyse: Albeit so that of
yourre pride & presumpcioun

The murie wordes of the Hooste to the Monk.

WHAN ended was my tale
of Melibee,
And of Prudence and
hire benignytee,
Oure Hooste seyde,
As I am feithful man,
And by that precious
corpus Madrian,
I hadde levere than a
barele ale

That goode lief my wyf hadde herd this tale!
For she nys nothyng of swich patience
As was this Melibeus wyf Prudence.
By Goddes bones! whan I bete my knaves,
She bryngeth me forth the grete clobbered staves,
And crieth, Slee the dogges everichoon,
And brek hem, bothe bak and every boon!
And if that any neigheboore of myne
Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclyne,
Or be so hardy to hire to trespass,
Whan she comth home she rampeth in my face,
And crieth, false coward! wreke thy wyf!
By corpus bones! I wol have thy knyf,
And thou shalt have my distaf and go spyne!
fro day to nyght right thus she wol bigynne;
Alas! she seith, that evere I was shape
To wedde a milksop or a coward ape
That wol been overlad with every wight!
Thou darst nat stonden by thy wyves right!

THIS is my lif, but if that I wol fighte;
And out at dore anon I moot me dighte,
Or elles I am but lost, but if that I
Be lik a wilde leoun, foolhardy.

I woot wel she wol do me slee som day
Som neigheboore, and thanne go my way;
for I am perilous with knyf in honde;
Albeit that I dar hire nat withstonde,
for she is byg in armes, by my feith,
That shal be fynde, that hire mysdoth or seith.

and folie, and of youre negligence and un-
konnyng, ye have mysborn yow and tres-
passed unto me; yet, forasmuche as I see
and biholde youre grete humylitee, & that
ye been sory and repentant of youre gyltes,
it constreyneth me to doon yow grace and
mercy. Therfore I receyve yow to my grace,
and foryeve yow outrely alle the offenses,
injuries, and wronges, that ye have doon
agayn me and myne; to this effect and to
this ende, that God of his endelees mercy
woleat the tyme of oure dyinge foryeve us
oure gyltes that we han trespassed to hym
in this wretched world; for douteles, if we
be sory and repentant of the synnes and
gyltes whiche we han trespassed in the
sighte of oure Lord God, he is so free and
somerciable, that he wole foryeve us oure
gyltes, and bryngen us to his blisse that
nevere hath ende. Amen.

Heere is ended Chaucers Tale of Melibee
and of Dame Prudence.

But lat us passe away fro this mateere.
My lord the Monk, quod he, be myrie of chyn
for ye shul telle a tale trewely.
Loo, Rouchestre stant heere faste by!
Ryd forth, myn owene lord, brek nat oure gam,
But by my trouthe, I knowe nat youre name,
Wher shal I calle yow my lord daun John,
Or daun Thomas, or elles daun Albon?
Of what hous be ye, by youre fader kyn?
I vowe to God, thou hast a ful fair skyn!
It is a gentil pasture ther thou goost;
Thou art nat lyk a penant, or a goost,
Upon my feith, thou art som officer,
Som worthy sexteyn, or some celerer,
for by my fader soule, as to my doom,
Thou art a maister, whan thou art at boom;
No povre cloysterer, ne no novys,
But a governour, both wily and wys,
And therwithal of brawnes and of bones,
A welfarynge persone for the nones.
I pray to God, yeve hym confusioun
That first thee broghte unto religioun.
Thou woldest han been a trede fowel aright;
Haddestow as greet a leewe as thou hast myght,
To parfourn al thy lust in engendrure,
Thou haddest bigeten many a creature.
Alas! why werestow so wyd a cope?
God yeve me sorwe! but and I were a pope,
Nat oonly thou, but every myghty man,
Though he were shorn ful hye upon his pan,
Sholde have a wyf; for al the world is lorn;
Religioun hath take up al the corn
Of tredyng, and we borel men been shrympes;
Of fieble trees ther comen wretched ympes.
This maketh that oure heires been so skilend;
And feble, that they may nat wel engendre.
This maketh that oure wyves wole assaye
Religious folk, for ye mowe bettre paye
Of Venus paiements than mowe we.
God woot, no Lussheburghes payen ye!

But be nat wrooth, my lord, for that I pleye,
ful ofte in game a sooth, I have herd seye!
His worthy Monk took al in pacience,
And seyde, I wol doon al my dili-
gence,

As fer as sowneth into honestee,
To telle yow a tale, or two, or three.
And if yow list to herke hyderward,
I wol yow seyn the lyf of Seint Edward,
Or ellis, first, tragedies wol I telle,
Of whiche I have an hundred in my celle.
Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storie,
As olde bookes maken us memorie,
Of hym that stood in greet prosperitee
And is yfallen out of heigh degree

HEERE BIGYNNETH THE MONKES TALE, DE CASIBUS
VIRORUM ILLUSTRUM

WHOL biwaille, in man-
ere of tragedie,
The harm of hem that
stooode in heigh degree,
And fillen so that ther
nas no remedie
To brynge hem out of
hir adversitee;
for certein, whan that
fortune list to fleo,
Ther may no man the cours of hire withholde.
Lat no man truste on blynd prosperitee;
Be war by thise ensamples trewe and olde.

De Lucifero

At Lucifer, though he an angel were,
And nat a man, at hym wol I bigynne;
for, though fortune may noon angel dere,
from heigh degree yet fel he for his synne
Doun into helle, where he yet is inne.
O Lucifer! brightest of angels alle,
Now artow Sathanas, that mayst nat twynne
Out of miserie, in which that thou art falle.

De Adamo

Loo Adam, in the feeld of Damyssene,
With Goddes owene fynger wrought was he,
And nat bigeten of mannes sperme unclene,
And welte al paradys, savynge o tree.
Hadde nevere worldly man so heigh degree
As Adam, til he for mys governaunce
Was dryve out of hys hye prosperitee
To labour, and to helle, and to meschaunce.

De Sampson

SOO Sampson, which that was
annunciat
By thangel, longe er his
nativitee,
And was to God Almyghty
consecrat,
And stood in noblesse, whil he myghte see.
Was nevere swich another as was hee,

Into myserie, and endeth wretchedly;
And they ben versified comunely
Of six feet, which men clepen exametron.
In prose eek been endited many oon,
And eek in meetre, in many a sondry wyse;
Lo, this declaryng oghte ynogh suffice.
Now herkneth, if yow liketh for to heere;
But first, I yow biseeke in this mateere,
Though I by ordre telle nat thise thynges,
Be it of popes, emperours, or kynges,
After hir ages, as men writen fynde,
But telle hem som bifore and som bihynde,
As it now comth unto my remembrance;
Have me excused of min ignoraunce.
Explicit.

To speke of strengthe, and therwith hardy-
nesse;
But to his wyves toolde he his secrete,
Thurgh which he slow hymself, for wretched-
nesse.

Sampson, this noble almyghty champioun,
Withouten wepene save his handes tweye,
He slow and al torente the leoun,
Toward his wedding walkynge by the weye.
His false wyf koude hym so plesse and preye
Til she his conseil knew; and she untrewed
Unto his foos his conseil gan biwrewe,
And hym forsook, and took another newe.

Thre hundred foxes took Sampson for ire,
And alle hir tayles he togydre bond,
And sette the foxes tayles alle on fire,
for he on every tayl had knyrt a brond;
And they brende alle the cornes in that lond,
And alle hire olyveres, and vynes eke.
A thousand men he slow eek with his hond,
And hadde no wepene but an asses cheke.

Whan they were slayn, so thursted hym
that he
Was wel ny lorn, for which he gan to preye
That God wolde on his peyne han som pitee,
And sende hym drynke, or elles moste he
deye;
And of this asses cheke, that was dreye,
Out of a wang/tooth sprang anon a welle,
Of which he drank ynogh, shortly to seye,
Thus heelp hym God, as Judicum can telle.

By verray force at Gazan, on a nyght,
Maugree Philistiens of that citee,
The gates of the toun he hath upplyght,
And on his bak yecaryed hem hath hee
hye on an hille, that men myghte hem see.
O noble almyghty Sampson, lief and deere,
Had thou nat toolde to wommen thy secrete,
In al this world ne hadde been thy peere!

The
Monkes
Tale

This Sampson nevere ciser drank, ne wyn,
Ne on his heed cam rasour noon, ne sheere,
By precept of the messenger divyn;
for alle his strengthes in his heeres weere;
And fully twenty wynter, yeer by yeere,
He hadde of Israel the governaunce;
But soone shal he wepe many a teere,
for wommen shal hym bryngen to meschaunce.

Unto his lemman Dalida he tolde
That in his heeris al his strengthe lay,
And falsly to his foomen she hym solde;
And slepyng in hir barm upon a day
She made to clippe or shere his heer away,
And made his foomen al his craft espyen;
And whan that they hym foond in this array,
They bounde hym faste, and putten out his eyen.

But er his heer were clipped or yshave,
Ther was no boond with which men myghte him
bynde;

But now is he in prison in a cave,
Whereas they made hym at the queerne grynde.
O noble Sampson, strongest of mankynde!
O whilom juge in glorie and in richesse!
Now maystow wepen with thyne eyen blynde,
Sith thou fro wele art falle in wrecchednesse.

Thende of this caytyf was as I shal seye;
His foomen made a feeste upon a day,
And made hym as hir fool biforn hem pleye;
And this was in a temple of greet array.
But atte laste he made a foul affray;
for he two pilers shook, and made hem falle,
And down fil temple and al, and ther it lay,
And slow hymself, and eek his foomen alle.

This is to seyn, the prynces everichoon,
And eek thre thousand bodyes were ther slayn
With fallynge of the grete temple of stoon.
Of Sampson now wol I namooore sayn,
Beth war by this ensample oold and playn
That no men telle hir conseil til hir wyves
Of swich thyng as they wolde han secree fayn,
If that it touche hir lymes or hir lyves.

De Ercule



Of Hercules, the sovereyn conquerour,
Synge his werkes laude and heigh
renoun:
for in his tyme of strengthe he was
the flour.

He slow, and rafte the skyn of the
leoun;
He of Centauros leyde the boost adoun;
He Arpies slow, the cruell bryddes felle;
He golden apples rafte of the dragoun;
He drow out Cerberus, the hound of helle:

He slow the cruell tyrant Busirus,
And made his hors to frete hym, flessch and boon;
He slow the firy serpent venymus;
Of Acheloy's two hornes, he brak oon;
And he slow Cacus in a cave of stoon;
He slow the geant Antheus the stronge;

He slow the grisly boor, and that anoon;
And bar the hevenc on his nekke longe.

Was nevere wight sith that this world bigan,
That slow so many monstres as dide he;
Thurghout this wyde world his name ran,
What for his strengthe, and for his heigh bountee,
And every reawme wente he for to see.
He was so stroong that no man myghte hym lette;
At bothe the worldes endes, seith Trophee,
In stide of boundes, he a pileer sette.

A lemman hadde this noble champion,
That highte Dianira, fressh as May;
And as this clerkes maken mencion,
She bath hym sent a sherte fressh and gay.
Allas, this sherte, allas, and weylaway!
Evenymed was so subtilly withalle,
That, er that he had wered it half a day,
It made his flessch al from his bones falle.

But natheles somme clerkes hire excusen
By oon that highte Nessus, that it maked;
Be as he may, I will hire noght accusen;
But on his bak this sherte he wered al naked
Til that his flessch was for the venym blaked;
And whan he saugh noon oother remedye,
In hoot coles he bath hymselfen raked;
for with no venym deigned hym to dye.

Thus starf this worthy, myghty Hercules;
Lo! who may truste on fortune any throwe?
for hym that folweth al this world of prees,
Er he be war, is ofte yleyd ful lowe.
ful wys is he that kan hymselfen knowe.
Beth war! for whan that fortune list to glose,
Thanne wayteth she hir man to overthrowe
By swich a wey as he wolde leest suppose.

HE myghty trone, the precious
tresor,
The glorious ceptre and roial
magestee
That hadde the kyng Nabugodo-
nosor,

With tonge unnethe may discryved bee.
He twyes wan Jerusalem the citee;
The vessel of the temple he with hym ladde.
At Babiloigne was his sovereyn see,
In which his glorie and his delit he hadde.

The faireste children of the blood roial
Of Israel he leet do gelde anoon,
And maked ech of hem to been his thral.
Amonges othere Daniel was oon,
That was the wiseste child of everychon,
for he the dremes of the kyng expowned,
Whereas in Chaldeye clerk ne was ther noon
That wiste to what fyn his dremes sowned.

This proude kyng leet make a statue of gold,
Sixty cubites long, and sevene in brede,
To which ymage, bothe yonge and oold
Comanded he to loute, and have in drede,

Or in a fourneys ful of flambe rede
he shal be brent that wolde noght obeye.
But nevere wolde assente to that dede
Daniel, ne his yonge felawes tweye.

This kyng of kynges proud was and elaat;
he wende that God that sit in magestee,
Ne myghte hym nat bireve of his estaat;
But sodeynly he loste his dignytee,
And lyk a beest hym semed for to bee,
And eet hey as an oxe, and lay theroute;
And eet hey as an oxe, and lay theroute;
In reyn with wilde beestes walked hee,
Til certein tyme was ycome aboute.

And lik an egles fettheres were his heres,
his nayles lik a briddes clawes weere;
Til God relessed hym a certeyn yeres,
And yaf hym wit; and thanne with many a teere
he thanked God, and evere his lyf in feere
Was he to doon amys, or moore trespass,
And, til that tyme he leyd was on his beere,
he knew that God was ful of myght and grace.

De Bal-
thasar



IS sone, which that highte Balthasar,
That heeld the regne after his fader
day,
He by his fader koude noght be war,
for proud he was of herte and of
array;

And eek an ydolastre he was ay.
his hye estaat assured hym in pryde;
But fortune caste hym down, and ther he lay,
And sodeynly his regne gan divide.

A feeste he made unto his lordes alle,
Upon a tyme, and bad hem blithe bee;
And thanne his officeres gan he calle,
Gooth, bryngeth forth the vesselles, quod he,
Whiche that my fader, in his prosperitee,
Out of the temple of Jerusalem birafte,
And to oure hye goddes thanke we
Of honour, that oure eldres with us lafte.

his wyf, his lordes, and his concubynes
Hy drouken, whil hire appetites laste,
Out of this noble vesselles sondry wynes;
And on a wal this kyng his eyen caste,
And saugh an hand armlees, that wroot ful faste,
for feere of which he quook, and siked soore.
This hand, that Balthasar so soore agaste,
Wroot Mane, techel, phares, and namooore.

In al that land magicien was noon
That koude expounde what this lettre mente;
But Daniel expowned it anoon,
And seyde, King, God to thy fader lente
Glorie and honour, regne, tresour, rente;
And he was proud, and nothyng God ne dradde,
And therefore God greet wreche upon hym sente,
And hym birafte the regne that he hadde.

He was out cast of mannes compaignye;
With asses was his habitacioun,
And eet hey as a beest in weet and drye,
g

Til that he knew, by grace and by resoun,
That God of hevenc hath domynacioun
Over every regne and every creature;
And thanne hadde God of hym compassioun,
And hym restored his regne and his figure.

Eek thou, that art his sone, art proud also,
And knowest alle thise thynges verraily,
And art rebel to God, and art his foo;
Thou drank eek of his vesselles boldely;
Thy wyf eek, and thy wench, synfully
Dronke of the same vesselles sondry wynys,
And herpest false goddes cursedly;
Therfore to thee yshapen ful greet pyne ys.

This hand was sent from God, that on the wal
Wroot, Mane, techel, phares, truste me;
Thy regne is doon, thou weyest noght at al;
Dwydded is thy regne, and it shal be
To Medes and to Perses yeven, quod he,
And thilke same nyght this kyng was slawe,
And Darius occupieth his degre,
Thogh he therto hadde neither right ne lawe.

Lordynges, ensample heerby may ye take,
How that in lordshipe is no sikernes;
for whan fortune wole a man forsake,
She bereth away his regne and his richesse,
And eek his freendes, bothe moore and lesse;
for what man that hath freendes thurgh fortune,
Mishap wol make hem enemys, I gesse;
This proverbe is ful sooth and ful commune.



ENOBLIA, of Palymerie queene,
As writen Persiens of hir noblesse,
So worthy was in armes and so
keene,
That no wight passed hire in hardy-
nesse,
Ne in lynage, nor oother gentilesse.
Of kynges blood of Perce is she descended;
I seye nat that she hadde moost fairnesse,
But of hire shape she myghte nat been amended.

from hire childhede I fynde that she fledde
Office of wommen, and to wode she wente;
And many a wilde hertes blood she shedde
With arwes brode that she to hem sente.
She was so swift that she anon hem hente,
And whan that she was elder, she wolde kille
Leouns, leopardes, and beres al torente,
And in hir armes weelde hem at hir wille.

She dorste wilde beestes dennes seke,
And rennen in the montaignes al the nyght,
And slepen under the bussh; and she koude eke
Wrastlen by verray force and verray myght
With any yong man, were he never so wight;
Ther myghte nothyng in hir armes stonde.
She kepte hir maydenhod from every wight;
To no man deigned hire for to be bonde.

But atte laste hir freendes han hire maried
To Odenake, a prynce of that contree;

The
Monkes
Tale

De Ce-
nobia

Al were it so that she hem longe taried;
And ye shul understonde how that he
Hadde swiche fantasies as hadde she.
But natheles, whan they were knyght infeere,
They lyved in joye and in felicitye,
For ech of hem hadde oother lief and deere,

Save o thyng, that she wolde nevere assente,
By no wey, that he sholde by hire lye
But ones, for it was hir pleyn entente
To have a child, the world to multiplye;
And al so soone as that she myghte espye
That she was nat with childe with that dede,
Thanne wolde she suffre hym doon his fantasye
Eft soone, and nat but oones, out of drede.

And if she were with childe at thilke cast,
Na moore sholde he pleyen thilke game
Til fully forty dayes weren past;
Thanne wolde she ones suffre hym do the same.
Al were this Odenake wilde or tame,
He gat na moore of hire, for thus she seyde,
It was to wyves lecherie and shame
In oother caas, if that men with hem pleyde.

Two sones by this Odenake hadde she,
The whiche she kepte in vertu and lettrure;
But now unto our tale turne we.
I seye, so worshipful a creature,
And wys therwith, and large with mesure,
So penyble in the werre, and curteis eke,
Ne moore labour myghte in werre endure
Was noon, though al this world men sholde seke.

Hir riche array ne myghte nat be told,
As wel in vessel as in hire clothyng;
She was al clad in perree and in gold,
And eek she laste noght, for noon huntynge,
To have of sondry tonges ful knowyng,
Whan that she leyser hadde, and for to entende
To lerne bookes was al hire likyng,
How she in vertu myghte hir lyf dispende.

And, shortly of this storie for to tete,
So doughty was hir housbonde and eek she,
That they conquered manye regnes grete
In the orient, with many a faire citee
Apertenaunt unto the magestee
Of Rome, & with strong hond held hem ful faste;
Ne nevere myghte hir foomen doon hem flee,
Hy whil that Odenakes dayes laste.

Hir batailles, whoso list hem for to rede,
Agayn Sapor the kyng and othere mo,
And how that al this proces fil in dede,
Why she conquered, and what title therto,
And after of hir meschief and hire wo,
How that she was biseged and ytake,
Lat hym unto my maister Petrark go,
That writ ynough of this, I undertake.

Whan Odenake was deed, she myghtily
The regnes heeld, and with hire propre bonde

Agayn hir foos she faught so cruelly,
That ther nas kyng ne prynce, in al that londe
That he nas glad, if he that grace fonde,
That she ne wolde upon his lond werreye;
With hire they maden alliance by bonde
To been in pees, and lete hire ride and pleye.

The emperour of Rome, Claudius,
Ne hym bifore, the Romayn Galien,
Ne dorste nevere been so corageous
Ne noon Emryn, ne noon Egipcien,
Ne Surrien, ne noon Arabyen,
Within the feeldes that dorste with hire fighte
Lest that she wolde hem with hir handes slen,
Or with hir meignee putten hem to flighte.

In kynges habit wente hir sones two,
As heires of hir fadres regnes alle,
And Hermanno, and Thymalao
Hir names were, as Persiens hem calle.
But ay fortune hath in hire hony galle:
This myghty queene may no while endure,
fortune out of hir regne made hire falle
To wretchednesse and to mysaventure.

Hurelian, whan that the governaunce
Of Rome cam into his handes tweye,
He shoope upon this queene to doon vengeance,
And with his legions he took his weye
Toward Cenobie, and, shortly for to seye,
He made hire flee, and atte last hire hente,
And fettred hire, and eek hire children tweye,
And wan the lond, and boom to Rome he wente.

Amonges othere thynges that he wan,
Hir chaar, that was with gold wrought and perree,
This grete Romayn, this Hurelian,
Hath with hym lad, for that men sholde it see.
Biforen his triumphe walketh shee
With gilte cheynes on hire nekke hangynge;
Corouned was she, after hir degree,
And ful of perree charged hire clothyng.

Allas, fortune! she that whilom was
Dredeful to kynges and to emperoures,
Now gaureth al the peple on hire, alas!
And she that helmed was in starke stoures,
And wan by force townes stronge, and toures,
Shal on hir heed now were a vitremyte;
And she that bar the ceptre ful of floures
Shal bere a distaf, hire cost for to quyte.

NOBLE, o worthy Petro, glorie of
Spayne,
Whom fortune heeld so hye in
magestee,
Wel oghten men thy pitous deeth
complayne!
Out of thy land thy brother made thee flee,
And after, at a sege, by subtiltee,
Thou were bitrayed and lad unto his tente,
Wheras he with his owene hand slow thee,
Succedynge in thy regne and in thy rente.

The feeld of snow, with thegle of blak therinne,
Caught with the lymerod, coloured as the gleede,
He brew this cursednesse and al this synne.
The wikked nest was werker of this nede;
Noght Charles Olyver, that ay took heede
Of trouthe and honour, but of Armorihe
Genylon Olyver, corrupt for meede,
Broughte this worthy kyng in swiche a brike.

WORTHY Petro, kyng of Cipre,
also,
That Alisandre wan by heigh
maistrye,
ful many an hethen wroughtestow
ful wo,
Of which thyne owene liges hadde envye,
And, for nothyng but for thy chivalrye,
They in thy bed han slayn thee by the morwe.
Thus kan fortune hir wheel governe and gye,
And out of joye brynge men to sorwe.

Melan, grete Barnabo Viscounte,
God of delit, and scourge of Lumbardye,
Ally sholde I nat thyn in fortune accounte,
Sith in estaat thou clombe were so hye?
Thy brother sone, that was thy double allye,
for he thy newew was, and sone-in-lawe,
Withinne his prisoun made thee to dye;
But why, ne how, noot I that thou were slawe.

The ert Hugelyn of Pyze the langour
Ther may no tonge telle for pitee;
But litel out of Pyze stant a tour,
In whiche tour in prisoun put was he,
And with hym been his litel children thre;
The eldeste scarcely fyf yeer was of age.
Allas, fortune! it was greet crueltee
Swiche briddes for to putte in swiche a cage!

Dampned was he to dyen in that prisoun,
for Roger, which that bisshope was of Pyze,
hadde on hym maad a fals suggestioun,
Thurgh which the peple gan upon hym rise,
And putten hym to prisoun in swich wise
As ye han herd, and mete and drynke he hadde
So smal, that wel unnethe it may suffise,
And therwithal it was ful povre and badde.

And on a day bifil that, in that hour,
Whan that his mete wont was to be brought,
The gayler shette the dores of the tour.
He herde it wel, but he ne spak right noght,
And in his herte anon ther fil a thought
That they for hunger wolde doon hym dyen.
Allas! quod he, alas! that I was wrought!
Therwith the teeris fillen from his eyen.

His yonge sone, that thre yeer was of age,
Unto hym seyde, fader, why do ye wepe?
Whanne wol the gayler bryngen oure potage,
Is ther no morsel breed that ye do kepe?
I am so hungry that I may nat slepe;
Now wolde God that I myghte slegen evere!

Thanne sholde nat hunger in my wombe crepe;
Ther is nothyng, save breed, that me were levere.

Thus day by day this child bigan to crye,
Til in his fadres barm adoun it lay,
And seyde, fader, fader, I moot dye;
And kiste his fader, and dyde the same day;
And whan the woful fader deed it say,
for wo his armes two he gan to byte,
And seyde, Allas, fortune! and weylaway!
Thy false wheel my wo al may I wyte!

His children wende that it for hunger was
That he his armes gnaw, and nat for wo,
And seyde, fader, do nat so, alas!
But rather ete the flessch upon us two;
Oure flessch thou yaf us, take oure flessch us fro,
And ete ynogh! Right thus they to hym seyde,
And after that, withinne a day or two,
They leyde hem in his lappe adoun, and deyde.

Hymself, despeired, eek for hunger starf;
Thus ended is this myghty Erl of Pyze;
from heigh estaat fortune away hym carf.
Of this tragedie it oghte ynough suffise.
Whoso wol here it in a lenger wise,
Redeth the grete poete of Ytaille,
That highte Dant, for he kan al devyse
fro point to point, nat o word wol he faille.

ALTHOUGH that Nero were as vicious
As any feend that lith in helle adoun,
Yet he, as telleth us Swetonius,
This wyde world hadde in subjeccioun,
Bothe est and west, south and
septemtrion;
Of rubies, saphires, and of peerles white,
Were alle his clothes brouded up and doun;
for he in gemmes greetly gan delite.

Moore delicaat, moore pompous of array,
Moore proud, was nevere emperour than he;
That ilke clooth, that he hadde wered o day,
After that tyme he nolde it nevere see.
Nettes of gold/threed hadde he greet plentee
To fasshe in Tybre, whan hym liste pleye.
His lustes were al lawe in his decree,
for fortune, as his freend, hym wolde obeye.

He Rome brende for his delicacie;
The senatours he slow upon a day,
To heere how men wolde wepe and crie;
And slow his brother, and by his suster lay.
His mooder made he in pitous array;
for he hire wombe slitte, to biholde
Where he conceived was; so weylaway!
That he so litel of his mooder tolde.

No teere out of his eyen for that sighte
Ne cam, but seyde, A fair womman was she!
Greet wonder is how that he koude or myghte
Be domesman of hire dede beautee;
The wyn to bryngen hym comanded he,

And drank anon; noon oother wo he made.
Whan myght is joynd unto crueltee,
Allas! to depe wol the venym wade!

In yowthe a maister hadde this emperour,
To teche hym letterure and curteisye,
for of moralitee he was the flour,
As in his tyme, but if bookes lye;
And whil this maister hadde of hym maistrye,
He maked hym so konnyng and so sowple,
That longe tyme it was er tirannye,
Or any vice, dorste on hym uncwple.

This Seneca, of which that I devyse,
Bycause Nero hadde of hym swich drede,
for he fro vices wolde hym ay chastise
Discreetly, as by word, and nat by dede;
Sire, wolde he seyn, an emperour moot nede
Be vertuous, and hate tirannye;
For which he in a bath made hym to blede
On bothe his armes, til he moste dye.

This Nero hadde eek of acustumaunce
In yowthe agayns his maister for to ryse,
Whiche afterwarde hym thoughte a greet grevaunce;
Therefore he made hym dyen in this wise.
But natheles this Seneca the wise
Chees in a bath to dye in this manere
Rather than han another tormentise;
And thus hath Nero slayn his maister deere.

Now fil it so that fortune liste no lenger
The hye pryde of Nero to cherice;
for though that he were strong, yet was she
strenger;
She thoughte thus, By God, I am to nyce,
To sette a man that is fulfild of vice
In heigh degree, and emperour hym calle.
By God! out of his sete I wol hym trice;
Whan he leest weneth, sonnest shal he falle!

The peple roos upon hym on a nyght
for his defeaute, and whan he it espied,
Out of his dores anon he hath hym dight
Allone, and, ther he wende han ben allied,
He knocked faste, and ay, the moore he cried,
The faster shette they the dores alle;
Tho wiste he weel he hadde hymself mysgyed,
And wente his wey, no lenger dorste he calle.

The peple cride and rombled up and doun,
That with his crys herde he how they seyde,
Where is this false tiraunt, this Neroun?
for fere almoost out of his wit he breyde,
And to his goddes pitously he preyde
for socour, but it myghte nat bityde.
for drede of this, hym thoughte that he deyde,
And ran into a gardyn, hym to hyde.

And in this gardyn foond he cherles tweye
That seten by a fyr ful greet and reed,
And to thise cherles two he gan to preye
To sleen hym, and to girden of his heed,
That to his body, whan that he were deed,

Were no despit ydoon, for his defame.
Hymself he slow, he koude no better reed,
Of which fortune lough, and hadde a game.

HS nevere capitayn under a kyng
That regnes mo putte in subjeccioun,
Ne strengier was in feeld of alle thyng,
As in his tyme, ne gretter of renoun,
Ne moore pompous in heigh pre-
sumpcioun,
Chan Oloferne, which fortune ay kiste
So likerously, and ladde hym up and doun
Til that his heed was of, er that he wiste.

Nat only that this world hadde hym in awe
for lesynge of richesse or libertee,
But he made every man reneye his lawe.
Nabugodonosor was god, seyde hee,
Noon oother god ne sholde adoured bee.
Agayns his heeste no wight dorst trespace
Save in Bethulia, a strong citee,
Where Eliachim a preest was of that place.

But taak kepe of the deeth of Oloferne:
Amydde his hoost he dronke lay anyght,
Withinne his tente, large as is a berne,
And yit, for al his pompe and al his myght,
Judith, a womman, as he lay upright
Slepyng, his heed of smoot, and from his tente
ful pryvely she stal from every wight,
And with his heed unto hir toun she wente.

HAT nedeth it of kyng Anthiochus
To telle his hye roial magestee,
His hye pride, his werkes venymus,
for swich another was ther noon
as he.
Rede which that he was in Machabee,
And rede the proude wordes that he seyde,
And why he fil fro heigh prosperitee,
And in an hill how wrecchedly he deyde.

fortune hym hadde enhaunced so in pride
That verrailly he wende he myghte attayne
Unto the sterres, upon every syde;
And in balance weyen ech montayne;
And alle the floodes of the see restrayne.
And Goddes peple hadde he moost in hate;
Hem wolde he sleen in torment and in payne,
Wenynge that God ne myghte his pride abate.

And for that Nichanore and Thymothee,
Of Jewes weren vanquysshed myghtily,
Unto the Jewes swich an hate hadde he
That he bad greithe his chaar ful hastily,
And swoor, and seyde, ful despitously,
Unto Jerusalem he wolde eftsoone,
To wreken his ire on it ful cruelly;
But of his purpos he was let ful soone.

God for his manace hym so soore smoot
With invisible wounde, ay incurable,
That in hise guttes carf it so and boot,
That hise peynes weren importable;

And certeinly the wreche was resonable,
for many a mannes guttes dide he peyne;
But from his purpos cursd and dampnable
for al his smert he wolde hym nat restreyne;

But bad anon apparailen his hoost,
And sodeynly, er he was of it war,
God daunted al his pride and al his boost;
for he so soore fil out of his char,
for he so lemes and his skyn totar,
That it his lemes and his skyn totar,
So that he neyther myghte go ne ryde,
But in a chayer men aboute hym bar
Alle forbrused, bothe bak and syde.

The wreche of God hym smoot so cruelly,
That thurgh his body wikked wormes crepte;
And therewithal he stank so horribly,
That noon of al his meynee that hym kepte,
Whether so that he wook or ellis slepte,
Ne myghte nocht for styng of hym endure.
In this meschief he wayled and eek wepte,
And knew God lord of every creature.

To al his hoost and to hymself also
ful wlatson was the styng of his careyne;
No man ne myghte hym bere to ne fro;
And in this styng and this horrible peyne,
he starf ful wrecchedly in a monteyne.
Thus hath this robbour and this homycide,
That many a man made to wepe and pleyne,
Swich guerdoun as bilongeth unto pryde.

HE storie of Alisaundre is so
commune
That every wight that hath
discrecioun
hath herd somewhat or al of his
fortune.
This wyde world, as in conclusioun,
he wan by strengthe, or for his hye renoun
They weren glad for pees unto hym sende.
The pride of man and beest he leyde adoun
Wherso he cam, unto the worldes ende.

Comparioun myghte nevere yet been maked
Bitwixe hym and another conquerour;
for al this world for drede of hym hath quaked,
he was of knighthod and of fredom flour;
fortune hym made the heir of hire honour;
Save wyn and wommen, nothyng myghte aswage
his hye entente in armes and labour;
So was he ful of leonyn corage.

What preys were it to hym, though I yow tolde
Of Darius, and an hundred thousand mo,
Of kynges, princes, erles, dukes bolde,
Whiche he conquered, and broghte hem into wo?
I seye, as fer as man may ryde or go,
The world was his, what sholde I moore devyse?
for though I write or tolde yow everemo
Of his knyghthode, it myghte nat suffice.

Twelf yeer he regned, as seith Machabee;
Philippes sone of Macidoyn he was,

That first was kyng in Grece the contree.
O worthy gentil Alisaundre, alas!
That evere sholde fallen swich a cas!
Empoysoned of thyn owene folk thou weere;
Thy sys, fortune hath turned into aas,
And yet for thee ne weepe she nevere a teere!

Who shal me yeven teeris to compleyne
The deeth of gentillesse and of franchise,
That al the world weeldded in his demeyne,
And yet hym thoughte it myghte nat suffice?
So ful was his corage of heigh emprise.
Allas! who shal me helpe to endite
false fortune, and poyson to despise,
The whiche two of al this wo I wyte?

By wisdom, manhede, and by greet
labour
from humblehede to roial magestee
Up roos he, Julius the conquerour,
That wan al thoccident by land & see,
By strengthe of hand, or elles by
tretee,

But unto Rome made hem tributarie;
And sitthe of Rome the emperour was he,
Til that fortune weex his adversarie.

O myghty Cesar! that in Thessalie
Agayn Pompeus, fader thyn in lawe,
That of thorient hadde all the chivalrie
As fer as that the day bigynneth dawe,
Thouthurgh thy knyghthod hast hem take & slawe,
Save fewe folk that with Pompeus fledde,
Thurgh which thou putttest al thorient in awe,
Thanke fortune, that so wel thee spedde!

But now a litel while I wol biwaille
This Pompeus, this noble governour
Of Rome, which that fleigh at this bataille.
I seye, oon of his men, a fals traitour,
His heed of smoot, to wynnen hym favour
Of Julius, and hym the heed he broghte.
Allas, Pompeye, of thorient conquerour,
That fortune unto swich a fyn thee broghte!

To Rome agayn repaireth Julius
With his triumphe, lauriat ful hye;
But on a tyme Brutus and Cassius,
That evere hadde of his hye estaat envye,
ful prively had maad conspiracye
Agayns this Julius, in subtil wise,
And caste the place in which he sholde dye
With boydekyns, as I shal yow devyse.

This Julius to the Capitolie wente
Upon a day, as he was wont to goon,
And in the Capitolie anon hym hente
This false Brutus, and his othere foon,
And stiked hym with boydekyns anon
With many a wounde, and thus they lete hym lye;
But nevere gronte he at no strook but oon,
Or elles at two, but if his storie lye.

So manly was this Julius of herte,
And so wel lovede estaatly honestee,

**The
Monkes
Tale**

That though his deedly woundes soore smerte,
His mantel over his hypes castyth he
for no man sholde seen his privetee;
And as he lay of dying in a traunce,
And wiste verrailly that deed was hee,
Of honestee yet hadde he remembrance.

Lucan, to thee this storie I recomende.
And to Swetoun, and to Valerius also,
That of this storie writen word and ende,
How that to thise grete conquerours two
fortune was first freend, and sithen foe.
No man ne truste upon hire favour longe,
But have hire in awayt for everemo;
Wittnesse on alle thise conquerours stronge.

**De Cresus
Rege**

HIS riche Cresus, whilom kyng of
Lyde,
Of whiche Cresus Cirus soore hym
dradde,
Yet was he caught amyddes al his
pryde,

And to be brent men to the fyr hym ladde;
But swich a reyn down fro the welkne shadde
That slow the fyr, and made hym to escape;
But to be war no grace yet he hadde,
Til fortune on the galwes made hym gape.

Whanne he escaped was, he kan nat stente
for to bigynne a newe werre agayn.
He wende wel, for that fortune hym sente
Swich hap, that he escaped thurgh the rayn,
That of his foos he myghte nat be slayn;
And eek a swevene upon a nyght he mette,
Of which he was so proud, and eek so fayn,
That in vengeance he al his herte sette.

Upon a tree he was, as that hym thoughte,
Ther Juppiter hym wessh, bothe bak and syde,
And Phebus eek a fair towaille hym broughte
To dryen hym with, and therfore wex his pryde;
And to his doghter, that stood hym bisyde,
Which that he knew in heigh science habounde,
He bad hire telle hym what it signyfyde,
And she his dreem bigan right thus expounde.

The tree, quod she, the galwes is to meene;
And Juppiter bitokneth snow and reyn,
And Phebus, with his towaille so clene,
Tho been the sonne/bemes for to seyn;
Thou shalt anhangd be, fader, certeyn,
Reyn shal thee wasshe, and sonne shal thee drye.
Thus warned she hym ful plat and ful pleyn,
His doghter, which that called was Phanye.

Anhangd was Cresus, the proude kyng;
His roial trone myghte hym nat availle.
Tragedie is noon oother maner thyng;
Ne kan in syngyng crie ne biwaille,
But for that fortune alwey wole assaille
With unwar strook the regnes that been proude;
for whan men trusteth hire, thanne wol she faille,
And covere hire brighte face with a cloude.

Heere stynteth the Knyght the Monk of his Tale.
90

The prologe of the Nonnes Preestes Tale.

LOO! quod the Knyght, good
sire, namoore of this!
That ye han seyde is right
ynough, ywis,
And muchel moore; for litel
hevynesse
Is right ynough to muche
folk, I gesse.
I seye for me, it is a greet
disee

Whereas men han been in greet welthe and ese,
To heeren of hire sodeyn fal, alas!
And the contrarie is joye and greet solas,
As whan a man hath ben in povre estaat,
And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat,
And there abideth in prosperitee,
Swich thyng is gladsom, as it thynketh me,
And of swich thyng were goodly for to telle.

E, quod oure Hooste, by Saint Poules belle,
Ye seyeright sooth; this Monk, he clappeth
lowde;

He spak how fortune covered with a clowde,
I noot nevere what, and als of a Tragedie
Right now ye herde, and, pardee! no remedie
It is for to biwaille, ne compleyne
That that is doon; and als, it is a peyne,
As ye han seyde, to heere of hevynesse.
Sire Monk, namoore of this, so God yow blesse!
Yowre tale anoyeth al this compaignye;
Swich talkyng is nat worth a boterflye;
for thereinne is ther no desport ne game.
Wherfore, sire Monk, daun Piers by yowre name,
I pray yow hertely, telle us somewhat elles,
for sikerly, nere clynkyng of yowre belles
That on yowre bridel hange on every syde,
By hevne kyng, that for us alle dyde,
I sholde er this han fallen down for sleepe,
Althogh the slough had never been so deepe;
Thanne hadde your tale al be toold in weyn.
for certeinly, as that thise clerkes seyn,
Whereas a man may have noon audience,
Noght helpeth it to tellen his sentence;
And wel I woot the substance is in me,
If any thyng shal wel reported be.

Sir, sey somewhat of huntynge, I yow preye.
NHY! quod this Monk, I have no lust to
pleye;

Now lat another telle, as I have toold,
Thanne spak oure Hooste with rude speche
and boold,

And seyde unto the Nonnes Preest anon,
Com neer, thou preest, come hyder, thou sir John.
Telle us swich thyng as may oure hertes glade;
Be blithe, though thou ryde upon a jade.
What thogh thyn hors be bothe foule and lene,
If he wol serve thee, rekke nat a bene;
Looke that thyn herte be murie everemo.

Yis, sir, quod he, yis, Hooste, so moot I go,
But I be myrie, ywis, I wol be blamed.

And right anon his tale he hath attamed,
And thus he seyde unto us everichon,
This sweete preest, this goodly man, sir John.

**Heere bigynneth the Nonnes preestes tale of
the cok and hen, chauntecleer and pertelote.**

APOVRE wydwe, som-
del stape in age,
Was whilom dwellyng
in a narwe cotege,
Beside a greve, stond-
yng in a dale.
This wydwe, of which I
telle yow my tale,
Syn thilke day that she
was last a wyf,
In pacience ladde a ful symple lyf,
for litel was hir catel and hir rente.

By housbondrie, of swich as God hire sente,
She foond hirself, and eek hire doghtren two.
Thre large sowes hadde she, and namo;
Thre keen, and eek a sheep that bighte Malle.
ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hire halle,
In which she eet ful many a skelendre meel;
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.

No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte;
hir diete was accordant to hir cote.
Repleccioun ne made hire nevere sik,
And exercise, and hertes suffisaunce.
The goute lette hire nothyng for to daunce,
Napoplexie ne shente nat hir heed;
No wyn ne drank she, neither whit ne reed;
hir bord was served moost with whit and
blak.

Milk & broun breed, in which she foond no lak,
Seynd bacoun, and somtyme an ey or tweye,
for she was, as it were, a maner deye.

YEERD she hadde, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dych withoute,
In which she hadde a cok, heet Chaunte-
cleer.

In al the land of crowyng nas his peer.
his voys was murier than the murie orgon
On messe dayes that in the chirche gon;
Wel sikerer was his crowyng in his logge,
Chan is a clokke, or an abbey orlogge.
By nature he knew eche ascenciuon
Of thequynoxial in thilke toun;
for whan degrees fiftene were ascended,
Channe crewe he, that it myghte nat been
amended.

his coomb was redder than the fyn coral,
And batailled, as it were a castel wal;
his byle was blak, and as the jeet it shoon;
Lyk asure were his legges, and his toon;
his nayles whiter than the lylie flour,
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.

HIS gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
Sevene hennes, for to doon al his
plesaunce,

Which were his sutores and his paramours,
And wonder lyk to hym, as of colours;
Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote.

Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,
And compaignable, and bar hyrself so faire,
Syn thilke day that she was seven nyght oold,
That trewely she hath the herte in hoold
Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith;
He loved hire so, that wel was hym therwith.
But swiche a joye was it to here hem synge,
Whan that the brighte sonne gan to sprynge,
In sweete accord, My lief is faren in londe,
for thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
Beestes and briddes koude speke and synge.

AND so bifel, that in the dawninge,
As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next hym sat this faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecleer gan gromen in his throte,
As man that in his dreem is drecched soore.
And whan that Pertelote thus herde hym
roore,

She was agast, and seyde, O herte deere!
What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere?
Ye been a verray sleper; fy, for shame!

And he answerde and seyde thus: Madame,
I pray yow that ye take it not agrief;
By God, me thoughte I was in swich meschief
Right now, that yet myn herte is soore afright.
Now God, quod he, my swevene recche aright,
And kepe my body out of foul prisoun.

Me mette, how that I roomed up and down
Withinne our yeerd, whereas I saugh a beest
Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areest
Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed.
His colour was bitwixe yelow and reed;
And tipped was his tayl, and bothe his eeris,
With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heeris;
His snowte smal, with glowyng eyeen tweye.

Yet of his look for feere almost I deye;
This caused me my gronyng, doutlees.
Avoy! quod she, fy on yow, hertelees!
Allas! quod she, for by that God above!
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love.

I kan nat love a coward, by my feith!
for certes, whatso any womman seith,
We alle desiren, if it myghte bee,
To han housbondes hardy, wise, and free,
And secree, and no nygard, ne no fool,
Ne hym that is agast of every tool,
Ne noon avauntour, by that God above!
How dorste ye seyn, for shame, unto your love
That any thyng myghte make yow aferd?
Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd?
Allas! and konne ye been agast of swevenys?
Nothyng, God woot, but vanitee, in swevene is.
Swevenes engendren of replecciouns,
And ofte of fume, and of complecciouns
Whan humours been to habundant in a wight.

CERTES this dreem, which ye han met
tonyght,
Cometh of the grete superfluytee

Of youre rede colera, pardee,
Which causeth folk to dreden in hir dremes
Of arwes, and of fyre with rede lemes,
Of grete beestes, that they wol hem byte,
Of contek, and of whelpes, grete and lyte;
Right as the humour of malencolie
Causeth ful many a man, in sleepe, to crie,
for feere of blake beres, or boles blake,
Or elles, blake develes wole hem take.
Of othere humours koude I telle also,
That werken many a man in sleepe ful wo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I kan.
Lo Catoun, which that was so wys a man,
seyde he nat thus, Ne do no fors of dremes.
Now, sire, quod she, whan ye flee fro the bemes,
for Goddes love, as taak som laxatyf.
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I conseilte yow the beste, I wol nat lye,
That bothe of colere and of malencolie
Ye purge yow; and, for ye shal nat tarie,
Though in this toun is noon apothecarie,
I shal myself to herbes techen yow,
That shul been for youre hele, and for youre prow;
And in oure yeerd the herbes shal I fynde,
The whiche han of hire propretee, by kynde,
To purge yow bynethe, and eek above.
forget nat this, for Goddes owene love!
Ye been ful coleryk of compleccioun.
Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynde yow nat replet of humours hote;
And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,
That ye shul have a fevere terciane,
Or an agu, that may be youre bane.
A day or two ye shul have digestyves
Of wormes, er ye take youre laxatyves,
Of lawriol, centaure, and fumetere,
Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,
Of katapuce, or of gaitrys beryis,
Of herbe yve growyng in oure yeerd, ther mery is;
pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem yn;
Be myrie, housbonde, for youre fader kyn!
Dredeth no dreem; I kan sey yow namoore.

ADAME, quod he, graunt mercy of
yours loore,
But natheles, as touchyng daun
Catoun,
That hath of wysdom swich a greet
renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
By God, men may in olde bookes rede
Of many a man, moore of auctoritee
Than evere Caton was, so moot I thee,
That al the revers seyn of this sentence,
And han wel founden by experience,
That dremes been significaciouns,
As wel of joye as tribulaciouns
That folk enduren in this lif present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
The verray preeve sheweth it in dede.
Oon of the gretteste auctours that men rede
Seith thus, that whilom two felawes wente
On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente;
And happed so, they coomen in a toun,

Wheras ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple, and eek so streit of herbergage,
That they ne founde as muche as o cotage,
In which they bothe myghte ylogged bee;
Wherfore they mosten of necessitee,
As for that nyght, departen compaignye;
And ech of hem gooth to his hostelrye,
And took his loggyng as it wolde falle.
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle
fer in a yeerd, with oxen of the plough;
That oother man was logged wel ynough,
As was his aventure, or his fortune,
That us governeth alle as in commune.
And so bifel, that longe er it were day,
This man mette in his bed, theras he lay,
How that his felawe gan upon hym calle,
And seyde, Allas! for in an oxes stalle
This nyght I shal be mordred ther I lye.
Now help me, deere brother, or I dye;
In alle haste com to me, he sayde.

THIS man out of his sleep for feere abrayde;
But whan that he was wakened of his sleep,
He turned hym and took of it no keep;
Hym thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee.
Thus twis in his slepyng dremed hee,
And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
Cam, as hym thoughte, and seide, I am now slawe;
Bihold my bloody woundes, depe and wyde!
Arys up erly in the morwe tyde,
And at the west gate of the toun, quod he,
A carte ful of donge ther shaltow se,
In which my body is hid ful prively;
Do thilke carte arresten boldly.

My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn,
And tolde hym every point how he was slayn,
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
And truste wel, his dreem he foond ful trewe;
for on the morwe, as soone as it was day,
To his felawes in he took the way;
And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
After his felawe he bigan to calle.

The hostiler answerde hym anon,
And seyde, Sire, your felawe is agon;
As soone as day he wente out of the toun.
This man gan fallen in suspicioun,
Remembryng on his dremes that he mette,
And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he lette,
Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
A donge carte, as it were to donge lond,
That was arrayed in that same wise
As ye han herd the dede man devyse;
And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
Vengeaunce and justice of this felonye;

My felawe mordred is this same nyght,
And in this carte he lith gapyng upright.
I crye out on the ministres, quod he,
That sholden kepe and reulen this citee;
Harrow! allas! heere lith my felawe slayn!
What sholde I moore unto this tale sayn?
The peple out sterte, and caste the cart to
grounde,

And in the myddel of the dong they founde
The dede man, that mordred was al newe.

BLISFUL God, that art so just & trewe!
Lo howe that thou biwreyst mordre alway!
Mordre wol out, that se we day by day.
Mordre is so wlatson, and abhomytable
To God, that is so just and resonable,
That he ne wol nat suffre it heled be,
Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or thre;
Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.
And right anon, ministres of that toun
han hent the carter, and so soore engyned,
And eek the hostiler so soore wikkednesse anon,
That they biknewe hire wikkednesse anon,
And were anhangen by the nekke/bon.
Here may men seen that dremes been to drede;
And certes, in the same book I rede,
Right in the nexte chapitre after this,
I gadde nat, so have I joye or blis:

For certeyn cause, into a fer contree,
If that the wynd ne hadde been contrarie,
That made hem in a citee for to tarie
That stood ful myrie upon an haven/syde;
But on a day, agayn the eventyde,
The wynd gan change, & blew, right as hem leste.
Jolif and glad they wente unto hir reste,
And casten hem ful erly for to saille.
But to that o man flit a greet mervaille;
That oon of hem in slepyng as he lay,
Hym mette a wonder dreem agayn the day:
Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes syde
And hym comanded, that he sholde abyde,
And seyde hym thus: If thou tomorwe wende,
Thou shalt be dreynt; my tale is at an ende.

He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
And preyde hym his viage for to lette;
As for that day, he preyde him to byde.
His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,
Gan for to laughen, and scorned him ful faste.
No dreem, quod he, may so myn herte agaste,
That I wol lette for to do my thynges;
I sette nat a straw by thy dremynges,
for swevenes been but vanytees and japes;
Men dreme al day of owles or of apes,
And eek of many a maze therwithal;
Men dreme of thyng that nevere was ne shal.
But siith I see that thou wolt heere abyde,
And thus forslawthen wilfully thy tyde,
God woot it reweth me; and have good day!

And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.
But er that he hadde half his cours yseyled,
Noot I nat why, ne what myschaunce it eyled,
But casuelly the shippes botme rente,
And ship and man under the water wente
In sighte of othere shippes it bisyde,
That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
And therefore, faire Pertelote so deere,
By swiche ensamples olde maistow leere,
That no man sholde been to recchelees
Of dremes, for I seye thee, doutelees,
That many a dreem ful soore is for to drede.

In the lyf of Saint Kenelm I rede,
That was Kenulphus sone, the noble kyng
Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a thyng;

A lite er he was mordred, on a day,
His mordre in his avysoun he say.
His norice hym expowned every deel
His swevene, and bad hym for to kepe hym weel
for traisoun; but he nas but seven yeer oold,
And therfore litel tale hath he toold
Of any dreem, so hooly is his herte.
By God, I hadde levere than my sherte
That ye hadde rad his legende as have I.
Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
Macrobeus, that writ the avisioun
In Affrike of the worthy Cipiou,
Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been
Warnyng of thynges that men after seen.
And forthermoore, I pray yow looketh wel
In the Olde Testament, of Daniel,
If he heeld dremes any vanitee.

Reed eek of Joseph, and ther shul ye see
Wher dremes be somtyme, I sey nat alle,
Warnyng of thynges that shul after falle.
Looke of Egypt the kyng, daun Pharao,
His baker and his butiller also,
Wher they ne felte noon effect in dremes.
Whoso wol seken actes of sondry remes,
May rede of dremes many a wonder thyng.

Cresus, which that was of Lyde kyng,
Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,
Which signified he sholde anhangen bee?

O heere Andromacha, Sctores wyf,
That day that Sctor sholde lese his lyf,
She dremed on the same nyght biforn,
How that the lyf of Sctor sholde be lorn,

If thilke day he wente into bataille;
She warned hym, but it myghte nat availle;
He wente for to fighte natheles,
And he was slayn anon of Achilles.
But thilke tale is al to longe to telle,
And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle;
Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,
That I shal han of this avisioun
Adversitee; and I seye forthermoor,
That I ne telle of laxatyves no stoor,
for they been venymes, I woot it weel;
I hem diffye, I love hem never a deel!

Now let us speke of myrthe, & stynte al this;
Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
Of o thyng God hath sent me large grace;
for whan I se the beautee of youre face,
Ye been so scarlet-reed aboute youre eyen,
It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
for, also siker as In principio,
Mulier est hominis confusio;
Madame, the sentence of this Latyn is,
Womman is mannes joye, and al his blis.
for whan I feeles anyght your softe syde,
Albeit that I may nat on yow ryde,
for that oure perche is maad so narwe, allas!
I am so ful of joye and of solas,
That I diffye bothe swevene and dreem.

AND with that word he fley down fro the
a beam,
for it was day, and eek his hennes alle;
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,

For he hadde founde a corn, lay in the yerd.
Roial he was, he was namore aferd;
He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,
And trad as ofte, er that it was pryde.
He looketh as it were a grym leoun;
And on his toos he rometh up and down,
Hym deigned nat to sette his foot to grounde.
He chuketh, when he hath a corn yfounde,
And to hym rennen thanne his wyves alle.
Thus roial, as a prince is in an halle,
Leve I this Chauntecleere in his pasture;
And after wol I telle his aventure.

WHAN that the monthe in which the world
began,
That highte March, when God first
maked man,
Was compleet, and ypassed were also,
Syn March bigan, thritty dayes and two,
Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
His seven wyves walkyng by his syde,
Caste up his eyen to the bryghte sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus hadde yronne
Twenty degrees and oon, and somewhat moore;
And knew by kynde, and by noon oother loore,
That it was pryde, and crew with blisful stevene.
The sonne, he seyde, is clomben up on hevne
fourty degrees and oon, and moore, ywis.
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
Herkeneth thise blisful briddes how they synge,
And se the fresshe floures how they sprynge;
ful is myn herte of revel and solas.
But sodeynly hym fil a sorweful cas;
for evere the latter ende of joy is wo.
God woot that worldly joye is soone ago;
And if a rethor koude faire endite,
He in a cronique sauffy myghte it write,
As for a sovereyn notabilitee.
Now every wys man, lat him herkne me;
This storie is al so trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot de Lake
That wommen holde in ful greet reverence.
Now wol I come agayn to my sentence.

COLFOX, ful of sly iniquitee,
That in the grove hadde woned yeres
three,
By heigh ymaginacioun forncast,
The same nyght thurghout the hegges brast
Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;
And in a bed of wortes stille he lay,
Til it was passed undren of the day,
Waityng his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle;
As gladly doon these homycides alle,
That in await ligen to mordre men.
O false mordreour, lurkyng in thy den!
O newe Scariot, newe Genyloun!
false dissimylour, O Greek Synoun,
That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!
O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
That thou into that yerd flaugh fro the bemes!
Thou were ful wel ywarned by thy dremes,
That thilke day was perilous to thee.
But what that God forwoot moot nedes bee,
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After the opinioun of certain clerkis,
Witness on hym, that any parfit clerk is,
That in scole is greet alteracioun
In this mateere, and greet disputacioun,
And hath ben of an hundred thousand men.
But I ne kan nat bulle it to the bren,
As kan the hooly doctour Augustyn,
Or Boece, or the bisshope Bradwardyn,
Wheither that Goddes worthy forwytyn
Streyneth me nedefully to doon a thyng,
Nedely clepe I symple necessitee,
Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
To do that same thyng, or do it noght,
Though God forwoot it, er that it was wrought;
Or if his wityng streyneth never a deel
But by necessitee condicioneel.
I wil nat han to do of swich mateere;
My tale is of a cok, as ye may heere,
That took his conseil of his wyf, with sorwe,
To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
That he hadde met that drem that I of tolde.

COMMENNES conseil is been ful ofte cold;
Wommannes conseil broghte us first to go,
And made Adam fro Paradyse to go,
Theras he was ful myrie and wel at ese;
But, for I noot to whom it myght displese
If I conseil of wommen wolde blame,
Passee over, for I seyde it in my game.
Rede auctours where they tete of swich mateere,
And what they seyn of wommen ye may heere.
Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat myne;
I kan noon harm of no womman divyne.

HIRE in the soond, to bathe hire myrily,
Lith Pertelote, and alle hire sustres by,
Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so fre
Soong murier than the mermayde in the see;
for Phisilogus seith sikerly,
How that they synge wel and myrily.
And so bifel that, as he cast his eye,
Among the wortes, on a boterflye,
He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.
Nothyng ne liste hym thanne for to crowe,
But cride anon, Cok, cok! and up he sterte,
As man that was affrayed in his herte;
for naturelly a beest desireth flee
fro his contrarie, if he may it see,
Though he never erst hadde seyn it with his eye.
This Chauntecleer, when he gan hym espye,
He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
seyde, Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye gon?
Be ye affrayed of me that am youre frend?
Now certes, I were worse than a feend,
If I to yow wolde harm or vileynye.
I am nat come your conseil for tespye;
But trewely, the cause of my comyng
Was oonly for to herkne how that ye synge;
for trewely, ye have as myrie a stevene
As any aungel hath that is in hevne.
Therwith ye han in musyk moore feelyng
Than hadde Boece, or any that kan synge.
My lord youre fader, God his soule blesse!
And eek youre mooder, of hire gentillesse,
Han in myn hous ybeen to my greet ese,

And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plesse.
But for men speke of synnyng, I wol seye,
So moote I brouke wel myne eyen tweye,
Save yow, I herde nevere man yet synge
As dide youre fader in the morwenyng.
Certes, it was of herte, al that he song;
And for to make his voys the moore strong,
He wolde so peyne hym that with bothe his eyen
He moste wyne, so loude he wolde cryen,
And stonden on his tiptoon therwithal,
And strecche forth his nekke, long and smal.
And eek he was of swich discrecioun,
That ther nas no man in no regioun
That hym in song or wisdom myghte passe.
I have wel rad in Daun Burnel the Asse,
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok
for that a preestes sone yaf hym a knok
Upon his leg, whil he was yong and nyce,
He made hym for to lese his benefice;
But certeyn, ther nys no comparacioun
Bitwixe the wisdom and discrecioun
Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
Now syngeth, sire, for seinte charitee;
Lat se, konne ye youre fader countrefete.
This Chauntecleer his wynges gan to bete,
As man that koude his traysoun nat espie,
So was he raysshed with his flaterie.
Alas, ye lordes, many a fals flatour
Is in youre courtes, and many a losengeour,
That plesen yow yet more, by my feith,
Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith.
Redeth Ecclesiaste of flaterye;
Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye.
This Chauntecleer stood hye upon his toos,
Strecchyng his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos,
And gan to crowe loude for the nones;
And daun Russell, the fox, sturte up atones
And by the gargat hente Chauntecleer,
And on his bak toward the wode hym beer,
for yet ne was ther no man that hym sewed.

DESTINEE, that mayst nat been
eschewed!
Alas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro
the bemes!
Alas, his wyf ne roghte nat of
dremes!
And on a friday fil at this meschaunce,
O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
Syn that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
And in thy servyce dide al his power,
Moore for delit, than world to multiplie,
Why woldestow suffre hym on thy day to dye?
O Gaufrid, deere maister soverayn,
That, when thy worthy kyng Richard was slayn
With shot, compleynedest his deeth so soore!
Why ne hadde I now thy sentence, and thy loore,
The friday for to chide, as diden ye?
for on a friday, soothly, slayn was he.
Channe wolde I shewe yow how that I koude
pleyne
for Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.
Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun
Was nevere of ladyes maad, when Vlioun

Was wonne, and Pirrus, with his streite swerd,
Whan he hadde hent kyng Priam by the berd,
And slayn hym, as seith us Eneydos,
As maden alle the hennes in the clos,
Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.
But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighte,
ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,
Whan that hir housbonde hadde lost his lyf,
And that the Romayns hadde brennd Cartage;
She was so ful of torment and of rage,
That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
And brende hirselven with a stedfast herte.

WOF AL hennes, right so criden ye,
As, whan that Nero brende the citee
Of Rome, cryden the senatours wyves,
for that hir husbondes losten alle hir lyves;
Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
Now wole I turne to my tale agayn:
This sely wydwe, and eek hir doghtres two,
Herden thise hennes crie and maken wo,
And out at dores sturten they anon,
And syen the fox toward the grove gon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away,
And cryden, Out! harrow! and weylaway!
Ha! ha! the fox! and after hym they ran,
And eek with staves many another man;
Ran Colle, oure dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,
And Malkyn, with a dystaf in hir hand;
Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges,
forfered for the berkyng of the dogges,
And shoutyng of the men and wommen eek;
They ronned so, hem thoughte hir herte brek.
They yelleden, as feendes doon in helle;
The dokes cryden, as men wolde hem quelle;
The gees, for feere, flown over the trees;
Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;
So hydous was the noyse, a! benedicitee!
Certes, he Jakke Straw, and his meynce,
Ne made nevere shoutes half so shrille,
Whan that they wolden any flemyng kille,
As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
Of bras they broghten bemes, and of box,
Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe & powped,
And therwithal they shrieked and they howped;
It semed as that hevne sholde falle.

OW, goode men, I pray yow herkneth
alle;
Lo, how fortune turneth sodeynly
The hope & pryde eek of hir enemy!
This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
In al his drede unto the fox he spak,
And seyde, Sire, if that I were as ye,
Yet wolde I seyn, as wys God helpe me,
Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
A verray pestilence upon yow falle;
Now am I come unto the wodes syde,
Maugree youre heed, the cok shal heere abyde;
I wol hym etc, in feith, and that anon!
The fox answerde, In feith, it shal be don.
And as he spak that word, al sodeynly
This cok brak from his mouth delyverly
And heighe upon a tree he fleigh anon.
And whan the fox saugh that he was ygon,
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Alas! quod he, O Chauntecleer, alas!
I have to yow, quod he, ydoon trespas,
Inasmuche as I maked yow aferd,
Whan I yow hente, & broght out of the yerd;
But, sire, I dide it of no wikke entente;
Com down, and I shal telle yow what I mente;
I shal seye sooth to yow, God help me so!
Nay thanne, quod he, I shrewe us bothe two,
And first I shrewe myself, bothe blood and bones,
If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
Thou shalt namoore, thurgh thy flaterye,
Do me to synge, and wynke with myn eye;
for he that wynketh, whan he sholde see,
Al wilfully, God lat him nevere thee!
Nay, quod the fox, but God yeve hym meschaunce,
That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
That jangleth whan he sholde holde his pees.
O, swich it is for to be reccheles,
And negliget, and truste on flaterye.
But ye that holden this tale a folye,
As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
Taketh the moralite, goode men;
for Seint Paul seith, that al that writen is,
To oure doctrine it is ywritte, ywis.
Taketh the fruyt and lat the chaf be stille.

HEERE FOLWETH THE PHISICIENS TALE.

THER was, as telleth
Citus Livius,
A knyght that called
was Virginius,
Fulfil of honour & of
worthynesse,
And strong of frendes
and of greet richesse.
This knyght a doghter
hadde by his wyf,
No children hadde he mo in al his lyf.
Fair was this mayde in excellent beautee
Aboven every wight that man may see;
for Nature hath with sovereyn diligence
Yformed hire in so greet excellence,
As though she wolde seyn, Lo, I, Nature,
Thus kan I forme and peynte a creature
Whan that me list; who kan me countrefete?
Pigmalion noght, though he ay forge and bete,
Or grave, or peynte; for I dar wel seyn
Apelles, Zanzis, sholde werche in veyn,
Outher to grave, or peynte, or forge, or bete,
If they presumed me to countrefete.
for he that is the former principal
hath maked me his vicaire general
To forme and peynten erthely creaturis
Right as me list, and ech thyng in my cure is
Under the moone, that may wane and waxe,
And for my werk right nothyng wol I axe;
My lord and I been ful of oon accord;
I made hire to the worship of my lord.
So do I alle myne othere creatures,

Now, goode God, if that it be thy wille,
As seith my lord, so make us alle goode men,
And brynge us to his heighe blisse. Amen.
Heere is ended the Nonnes Preestes Tale.

Words of the Host to the Nonnes Priest.

IRE Nonnes Preest,
oure Hooste seide anon,
Iblessed be thy breche,
and every stoon!
This was a murie tale of
Chauntecleer;
But, by my trouthe, if
thou were seculer,
Thou woldest ben a
tredefoul aright;
for if thou have corage, as thou hast might,
Thee were nede of hennes, as I wene,
Ya, mo than sevene tymes seventene!
Se, whiche braunes hath this gentil preest,
So gret a nekke, and swich a large breest!
He loketh as a sparhawke with his eyen;
him nedeth nat his colour for to dyen
With brasile, ne with greyn of Portyngale,
Now, sire, faire falle yow for youre tale.
And after that, he with ful merie chere
Seide to another as ye shullen heere.

What colour that they han, or what figures,
Thus semeth me that Nature wolde seye.
THIS mayde of age twelve year was and
tweye,
In which that Nature hadde swich
delit;
for, right as she kan peynte a lilie whit,
And reed a rose, right with swich peynture
She peynted hath this noble creature
Er she were born, upon hir lymes fre,
Whereas by right swiche colours sholde be;
And Phebus dyed hath hire treses grete
Lyk to the streimes of his burned heete;
And if that excellent was hire beautee,
A thousandfoold moore vertuous was she.
In hire ne lakked no condicioun
That is to preyse, as by discrecioun.
As wel in goost as body chast was she;
for which she floured in virginitee
With alle humylitee and abstinence,
With alle attemperaunce and patience,
With mesure eek of beryng and array.
Discreet she was in answering alway,
Though she were wise as Pallas, dar I seyn;
hir facound eek, ful wommanly and pleynt;
No countrefeted termes hadde she
To seme wys; but after hir degree
She spak, and alle hire wordes moore & lesse
Sownynge in vertu and in gentillesse;
Shamefast she was, in maydens shame-
fastnesse,
Constant in herte, and evere in bisynesse
To dryve hire out of ydel slogardie.

Bacus hadde of hire mouth right no maistrie;
for wyn and youthe dooth Venus encesse,
As men in fyr wol casten oile or gresse.
And of hir owene vertu unconstreyned,
She hath ful ofte tyme syk hire feyned,
for that she wolde fien the compaignye
Where likly was to treten of folye,
As at feestes, revels, and at daunces,
That been occasions of daliaunces.
Swich thynges maken children for to be
To soone rype and boold, as men may se,
Which is ful perilous, and hath been yooore,
for al to soone may she lerne loore
Of booldnesse, whan she woxen is a wyf.
And ye maistresses, in youre olde lyf,
That lordes doghtres han in governaunce,
Ne taketh of my wordes no displeaunce;
Thenketh that ye been set in governynges
Of lordes doghtres, only for two thynges;
Outher for ye han kept youre honestee,
Or elles ye han falle in freletee,
And knowen wel ynough the olde daunce,
And han forsaken fully swich meschaunce
for everemo; therefore, for Cristes sake
To teche hem vertu looke that ye ne slake.
A theef of venysoun, that hath forlaft
his likerousnesse, and al his olde craft,
Kan kepe a forest best of any man;
Now kepeth hem wel, for if ye wol, ye kan;
Looke wel that ye unto no vice assente,
Lest ye be dampned for youre wikke entente;
for who so dooth, a traitour is certeyn;
And taketh hepe of that that I shal seyn;
Of alle tresons, sovereyn pestilence
Is whan a wight bitrayeth innocence.
E fadres and ye moodres eek, also,
Though ye han children, be it oon or two,
Youre is the charge of al hir surveiaunce;
Whil that they been under youre governaunce;
Beth war, that by ensample of youre lyvyng,
Or by youre negligence in chastisyng,
That they ne perisse; for I dar wel seye,
If that they doon, ye shul it deere abeye.
Under a shepheard softe and negligent
The wolf hath many a sheepe and lamb torent.
Suffieth oon ensample now as heere,
for I moot turne agayne to my matere.
THIS mayde, of which I wol this tale
expresse,
So kepeth herself, hir neded no mais-
tresse;
for in hir lyvyng maydens myghten
rede,
As in a book, every good word or dede
That longeth to a mayden vertuous,
She was so prudent and so bounteous;
for which the fame outsprong on every syde,
Bothe of hir beautee and hir bountee wyde;
That thurgh that land they preised hire echone
That loved vertu, save Envye allone,
That sory is of oother mennes wele,
And glad is of his sorwe and his unheele.
The doctour maketh this descripcioun.
h1

This mayde upon a day wente in the toun
Toward a temple, with hire mooder deere,
As is of yonge maydens the manere.
Now was ther thanne a justice in that toun,
That governour was of that regioun,
And so bifel, this juge his eyen caste
Upon this mayde, avysynge hym ful faste
As she cam forby ther this juge stood.
Anon his herte chaunged and his mood,
So was he caught with beautee of this mayde;
And to hymself ful pryvely he sayde,
This mayde shal be myn, for any man.
Anon the feend into his herte ran,
And taughte hym sodeynly, that he by slyghte
The mayden to his purpos wyne myghte.
for certes, by no force, ne by no meede,
Hym thoughte, he was nat able for to speede;
for she was strong of frendes, and eek she
Confermed was in swich soverayn bountee,
That wel he wiste he myghte hire nevere wyne
As for to make hire with hir body synne;
for which, by greet deliberacioun,
He sente after a cherl, was in the toun,
Which that he knew for subtil and for boold.
This juge unto this cherl his tale hath toold
In secree wise, and made hym to ensue
He sholde telle it to no creature,
And if he dide, he sholde lese his heed.
Whan that assented was this cursed reed,
Glad was this juge, and maked him greet cheere,
And yaf hym yiftes, preciouss and deere.
WHAN shapen was al hire conspiracie,
fro point to point, how that his lecherie
Parfourned sholde been ful subtilly,
As ye shul heere it after openly,
Hoom gooth the cherl, that highte Claudius.
This false juge that highte Apius,
So was his name, for this is no fable,
But knowen for historial thyng notable,
The sentence of it sooth is, out of doute;
This false juge gooth now faste aboute
To hasten his delit al that he may.
And so bifel soone after, on a day,
This false juge, as telleth us the storie,
As he was wont, sat in his consistorie,
And yaf his doomes upon sondry cas.
This false cherl cam forth, a ful greet pas,
And seyde, Lord, if that it be youre wille,
As dooth me right upon this pitous bille,
In which I pleyne upon Virginius;
And if that he wol seyn it is nat thus,
I wol it preeve, and fynde good witnessse
That sooth is that my bille wol expresse.
The juge answerde, Of this, in his absence,
I may nat yeve diffynityve sentence;
Lat do hym calle, and I wol gladly heere;
Thou shalt have alle right, and no wrong heere.
VIRGINIUS cam to wite the juges wille,
And right anon was rad this cursed bille;
The sentence of it was as ye shul heere:
To yow, my lord, sire Apius so deere,
Sheweth youre povre servant Claudius,
How that a knyght, called Virginius,

The
Phisiciens
Tale

Agayns the lawe, agayn al equitee,
Holdeth, expres agayn the wyl of me,
My servant, which that is my thral by right,
Which fro myn hous was stole upon a nyght,
Whil that she was ful yong; this wol I preeve
By witnesse, lord, so that it nat yow greeve.
She nys his doghter nat, what so he seye;
Wherfore to yow, my lord the juge, I preye,
Yeld me my thral, if that it be youre wille.
Lo, this was al the sentence of his bille.
Virginius gan upon the cherl biholde,
But hastily, er he his tale tolde,
And wolde have preeved it, as sholde a knyght,
And eek by witnessyng of many a wight,
That it was fals that seyde his adversarie,
This cursed juge wolde nothyng tarie,
Ne heere a word moore of Virginius,
But yaf his juggement, and seyde thus:
I deeme anon this cherl his servant have;
Thou shalt no lenger in thy house hir save.
Go, bryng hire forth, and put hire in oure ward,
The cherl shal have his thral; this I awarde.
Thurgh sentence of this justice Apus,
Moste by force his deere doghter given
Unto the juge, in lecherie to lyven,
He gooth hym hoom, and sette him in his halle,
And leet anon his deere doghter calle,
And, with a face deed as asshen colde,
Upon hir humble face he gan biholde,
With fadres pitee stikyng thurgh his herte,
Al wolde he from his purpos nat converte.
Doghter, quod he, Virginia, by thy name,
Ther been two weyes, outhere deeth or shame,
That thou most suffre; alas! that I was bore!
For nevere thou deservedest wherfore
To dyen with a swerd, or with a knyf.
O deere doghter, endere of my lyf,
Which I have fostred up with swich plesaunce,
That thou were nevere out of my remembraunce.
O doghter, which that art my laste wo,
And in my lyf my laste joye also;
O gemme of chastitee! in pacience
Take thou thy deeth, for this is my sentence.
For love, and nat for hate, thou most be deed;
My pitous hand moot smyten of thy heed!
Alas! that evere Apus the say!
Thus hath he falsly jugged the today.
And tolde hire al the cas, as ye bifore
Han herd; nat nedeth for to telle it moore.
MERCY, deere fader! quod this mayde,
And with that word she both hir armes
layde
About his nekke, as she was wont to do;
The teeris bruste out of hire eyen two,
And seyde, Goode fader, shal I dye?
Is ther no grace? is ther no remedye?
No, certes, deere doghter myn, quod he.
Channe yif me leysur, fader myn, quod she,
My deeth for to compleyne a litel space;
for pardee, I septe yaf his doghter grace
for to compleyne, er he hir slow, alas!
And God it woot, nothyng was hir trespas,
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But for she ran hir fader first to see,
To welcome hym with greet solempnitee.
And with that word she fil aswowne anon,
And after, whan hir swoynning is agon,
She riseth up, and to hir fader sayde,
Blissed be God, that I shal dye a mayde;
Yif me my deeth, er that I have a shame;
Dooth with youre child youre wyl, a Goddes name!
And with that word she preyed hym ful ofte
That with his swerd he wolde smyte softe;
And with that word aswowne down she fil.
Hir fader, with ful sorweful herte and wil,
Hir heed of smoot, and by the top it hente,
And to the juge he gan it to presente,
As he sat yet in doom in consistorie.
And whan the juge it saugh, as seith the storie,
He bad to take hym and anhangen hym faste;
But right anon a thousand peple in thraste,
To save the knyght, for routhe and for pitee,
for knowen was the false inquitee.
The peple anon hath suspect of this thyng,
By manere of the cherles chalangyng,
That it was by the assent of Apus;
They wisten wel that he was lecherus,
for which unto this Apus they gon,
And caste hym in a prisoun right anon,
Theras he slow hymself; and Claudius,
That servant was unto this Apus,
Was demed for to hange upon a tree;
But that Virginius, of his pitee,
So preyde for hym that he was exiled;
And elles, certes, he had been bigyled.
The remenant were anhangen, moore and lesse,
That were consentant of this cursednesse.
HERE men may seen how synne hath his
merite.

Beth war, for no man woot whom God wol
smyte
In no degree, ne in which maner wyse
The worm of conscience may agryse
Of wikked lyf, though it so pryvee be
That no man woot therof but God and he;
for be he lewed man, or ellis lered,
He noot how soone that he shal been afered.
Therefore, I rede yow, this conseil take,
forsaketh synne, er synne yow forsake.
Heere endeth the Phisiciens Tale.

The wordes of the Hoost to the Phisicien and the
Pardoner.

ARE hooste gan to swere
as he were wood;
Harrow! quod he, by nayles,
and by blood!
This was a fals cherl and a
fals justise!
As shameful deeth as herte
may devyse
Come to thise juges and
hire advocats!

Higate this sely mayde is slayn, alas!
Alas! to deere boughte she beautee!
Wherfore I seye al day, as men may see,

That yiftes of fortune and of Nature
Been cause of deeth to many a creature.
Hire beautee was hire deth, I dar wel sayn;
Alas! so pitously as she was slayn!
Of bothe yiftes that I speke of now
Men han ful ofte moore for harm than prow.

IT trewely, myn owene maister deere,
This is a pitous tale for to heere;
But natheles, passe over, is no fors;
I pray to God, so save thy gentil cors,
And eek thyne urnals, and thy jurdanes,
Thyn Ypocras, and eek thy Galianes,
And every boyste ful of thy letuarie;
God blesse hem, and oure lady Seinte Marie!
So moot I then, thou art a propre man,
And lyk a prelat, by Seint Ronyan!
Seide I nat wel? I kan nat speke in terme;
But wel I woot, thou doost myn hert to erme,
That I almoost have caught a cardyale.
By corpus bones! but I have triacle,
Or elles a draughte of moyste and corny ale,
Or but I heere anon a myrie tale,
Myn herte is lost, for pitee of this mayde.
Thou beel amy, thou Pardoner, he sayde,
Telle us som myrthe or japes right anon!
It shal be doon, quod he, by Seint Ronyon!
But first, quod he, heere at this ale stake
I wol bothe drynke, and eten of a cake.
And right anon the gentils gon to crye,
Nay! lat hym telle us of no ribaudye;
Telle us som moral thyng, that we may leere
Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly heere.
I graunte, ywis, quod he, but I moot thynke
Upon som honeste thyng, while that I drynke.

Heere folweth the prologe of the Pardoners
Tale.

RADIX MALORUM EST CUPIDITAS. Ad Timotheum, 6.
ORDYNGES, quod he, in
chirches whan I preche,
I peyne me to han an hauteyn
speche,
And ryng it out as round as
gooth a belle,
for I kan al by rote that I telle.
My theme is alwey oon, and
evere was,

Radix malorum est cupiditas.
first, I pronounce whennes that I come,
And thanne my bulles shewe I, alle and some;
Oure lige lordes seel on my patente,
That shewe I first, my body to warente,
That no man be so boold, ne preest ne clerk,
Me to destourbe of Cristes hooly werk;
And after that thanne telle I forth my tales,
Bulles of popes and of cardynales,
Of patriarkes and bishoppes I shewe;
And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
To saffron with my predicacioun,
And for to stire hem to devocioun.
Channe shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
Yerammed ful of cloutes and of bones;
Relikes been they, as wemen they echoon.
h 2

Thanne have I in latoun a sholder boon
Which that was of an hooly Jewes sheepe.
GOODE men, I seye, taak of my wordes
keepe;

If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxen swelle
That any worm hath etc, or worm ystonge,
Taak water of that welle, and wassh his tonge,
And it is hool anon; and forthermoor,
Of pokkes, and of scabbe, and every soor,
Shal every sheep be hool, that of this welle
Drynketh a draughte; taak kepe eek what I telle.
If that the goode man that the beestes oweth
Wol every wyke, er that the cok hym croweth,
fastyng, drinken of this welle a draughte,
As thilke hooly Jew oure eldres taughte,
his beestes and his stoor shal multiplie.
And, sires, also it heeeth jalousie;
for, though a man be falle in jalous rage,
Lat maken with this water his potage,
And nevere shal he moore his wyf mystriste,
Though he the soothe of hir defaute wiste;
Al had she taken preestes two or thre.
Heere is a miteyn eek, that ye may se;
He that his hand wol putte in this miteyn,
he shal have multiplying of his grayn,
Whan he hath sownen, be it whete or otes,
So that he offre pens, or elles grottes.

Goode men & wommen, o thyng warne I yow,
If any wight be in this chirche now
That hath doon synne horrible, that he
Dar nat, for shame, of it yshryven be,
Or any womman, be she yong or old,
That hath ymaked hir housbond cokewold,
Swich folk shal have no power ne no grace
To offren to my relikes in this place;
And whoso fyndeth hym out of swich blame,
He wol come up and offre on Goddes name,
And I assoille hym by the auctoritee
Which that by bulle ygraunted was to me.

Y this gaude have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
An hundred mark sith I was Pardoner.
I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewed peple is doun yset,
I preche, so as ye han herd bifoore,
And telle an hundred false japes moore.
Channe peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke,
And est and west upon the peple I bekke,
As dooth a dowwe sittynge on a berne;
Myne handes and my tonge goon so yerne,
That it is joye to se my bisynesse.
Of avarice and of swich cursednesse
Is al my prechyng, for to make hem free
To geven hir pens, and namely unto me;
for myn entente is nat but for to wynne,
And nothyng for correccioun of synne.
I rekke nevere, whan that they been beryed,
Though that hir soules goon ablakeberyed.
for certes, many a predicacioun
Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun;
Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterie,
To been aunvauced by ypocrisye;
And som for veyne glorie, and som for hate.
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for, when I dar noon oother weyes debate,
Channe wol I styngyng hym with my tonge
smerte
In prechyng, so that he shal nat asterte
To been defamed falsly, if that he
hath trespassed to my bretheren or to me;
for, though I telle noght his propre name,
Men shal wel knowe that it is the same,
By signes and by othere circumstances;
Thus quyte I folk that doon us displeasances;
Thus spitte I out my venym under hewe
Of hoolynesse, to semen hooly and trewe.
BUT, shortly, myn entente I wol devyse;
I preche of nothyng but for coveitise;
Therfore my theme is yet, & evere was,
Radix malorum est cupiditas.
Thus kan I preche agayn that same vice
Which that I use, and that is avarice.
But though myself be gilty in that synne,
Yet kan I maken oother folk to twynne
from avarice, and soore to repente.
But that is nat my principal entente;
I preche nothyng but for coveitise.
Of this matere it oghte ynogh suffice.
Channe telle I hem ensamples many oon
Of olde stories, longe tyme agoon:

BEERE BIGYNNETH THE PARDONERS TALE

IN flaundes whilom
was a compaignye
Of yonge folk, that
haunteden folye,
As riot, hasard, stewes
and tavernes,
Wheras with harpes,
lutes, and gyternes,
They daunce & pleyen
at dees, bothe day and
nyght,
And eten also and drynken over hir myght,
Churgh which they doon the devel sacrifice
Withinne that devels temple, in cursed wise,
By superfluytee abhomynable;
hir othes been so grete and so dampnable,
That it is grisly for to heere hem swere;
Oure blissed Lordes body they totere;
hem thought that Jewes rente hym noght
ynogh;
And ech of hem at othere synne lough.
And right anon thanne comen tombesteres
fetyes and smale, and yonge frutesteres,
Syngeres with harpes, baudes, wafereres,
Whiche been the verray develes officeres,
To kyndle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
That is annexed unto glotonye.
The hooly writ take I to my witnesse,
That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.
O, how that dronken Looth, un-
hyndely,
Lay by his doghtres two, un-
wityngly;

for lewed peple loven tales olde;
Swiche thynges kan they wel reporte & holde.
What! trowe ye the whiles I may preche,
And wyne gold and silver for I teche,
That I wol lyve in poverté wilfully?
Nat, nay, I thoghte it nevere, trewely!
for I wol preche and begge in sondry landes;
I wol nat do no labour with myne handes,
Ne make baskettes, and lyve therby,
Bycause I wol nat beggen ydelly.
I wol noon of the Apostles countrefete;
I wol have moneie, wolle, chese and whete,
Al were it yeven of the povereste page,
Or of the povereste wydwe in a village,
Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.
Nay! I wol drynke licour of the vyne,
And have a joly wenche in every toun;
But herkneth, lordynges, in conclusioun.
Your likyng is that I shal telle a tale.
Now have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,
By God, I hope I shal yow telle a thyng
That shal, by resoun, been at yowre likyng;
for though myself be a ful vicious man,
A moral tale yet I yow telle kan,
Which I am wont to preche, for to wyne.
Now hoold your pees, my tale I wol bigynne.

So dronke he was, he nyste what he wroughte.
Herodes, whoso wel the stories soghte,
Whan he of wyn was repleet at his feeste,
Right at his owene table, he yat his heeste
To sleen the Baptist John, ful gylteles.
Senec seith eek a good word doutheles;
He seith, he kan no difference fynde
Bitwix a man that is out of his mynde
And a man which that is dronkelewe,
But that woodnesse, yfallen in a shrewe,
Persevereth lenger than dooth dronkenesse.
O glotonye, ful of cursednesse;
O cause first of oure confusioun;
O original of oure dampnacioun;
Til Crist hadde boght us with his blood agayn.
O, how deere, shortly for to sayn,
Aboght was thilke cursed vileynye;
Corrupt was al this world for glotonye.
Adam oure fader, and his wyf also,
fro Paradys to labour and to wo
were dryven for that vice, it is no drede;
for whil that Adam fasted, as I rede,
He was in Paradys; and whan that he
set of the fruyt defensed, on the tree,
Anon he was out cast to wo and peyne.
O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne!
WISTE a man how manye maladyes
folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,
He wolde been the moore mesurable
Of his diete, sittynge at his table.
Alas! the shorte throte, the tendre mouth,
Maketh that, est and west, and north & south,
In erthe, in eir, in water, men to swynke

To gete a gloton deyntee mete and drynke!
Of this matiere, O Paul, wel kanstow trete;
Mete unto wombe, and wombe eek unto mete,
Shal God destroyen bothe, as Paulus seith.
Alas! a foul thyng is it, by my feith,
To seye this word, and fouler is the dede
Whan man so drynketh of the white and rede,
That of his throte he maketh his pryvee,
Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee.
The Apostel wepyng seith ful pitously,
Ther walken manye of which yow toold have I,
I seye it now, wepyng with pitous voys,
That they been enemyes of Cristes croys,
Of which the ende is deeth, wombe is hir god.
O wombe! O bely! O styngyng cod!
Fulfil of donge and of corrupcioun;
At either ende of thee foul is the soun;
How greet labour and cost is thee to fynde!
Thise cookes, how they stampe, and streyne, and
grynde,
And turnen substaunce into accident,
To fulfille al thy likerous talent.
Out of the harde bones knokke they
The mary, for they caste noght away
That may go thurgh the golet softe and swoote;
Of spicerie, of leef, and bark, and roote,
Shal been his sauce ymaked by delit,
To make hym yet a newer appetit;
But certes, he that hauntheth swiche delices
Is deed, whil that he lyveth in tho vices.
LECHEROUS thyng is wyn, and dronk-
enesse
Is ful of stryvyng and of wrecchednesse.
O dronke man! disguised is thy face,
Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace,
And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the soun
As though thou seydest ay, Sampsoun, Samp-
soun;
And yet, God woot, Sampsoun drank nevere no
wyn.
Thou fallest, as it were a styked swyn,
Thy tonge is lost and al thyn honeste cure;
for dronkenesse is verray sepulture
Of mannes wit and his discrecioun;
In whom that drynke hath dominacioun
He kan no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
Now kepe yow fro the white and fro the rede,
And namely fro the white wyn of Lepe,
That is to selle in fysshstrete, or in Chepe.
This wyn of Spaigne crepeth subtilly
In othere wyne, growynge faste by,
Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,
That whan a man hath dronken draughtes thre,
And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,
He is in Spaigne, right at the toun of Lepe,
Nat at the Rochele, ne at Burdeaux toun;
And thanne wol he seye, Sampsoun, Sampsoun.
But herkneth, lordyngs, o word, I yow preye,
That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,
Of victories in the Olde Testament,
Thurgh verray God, that is omnipotent,
were doon in abstinence and in preyere;
Looketh the Bible, and ther ye may it leere.

h 3

Looke, Attila, the grete conquerour,
Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dishonour,
Bledynge ay at his nose in dronkenesse;
A capitayn sholde lyve in sobrenesse.
And over al this, avyseth yow right wel
What was comaunded unto Lamuel, ...
Nat Samuel, but Lamuel seye I;
Redeth the Bible, and fynde it expresly
Of wyn yevyng to hem that han justise.
Namoore of this, for it may wel suffice.
AND now I have spoken of glotonye,
Now wol I yow deffenden hasardrye.
Hasard is verray mooder of lesynges,
And of deceite, and cursed forswerynges,
BlaspHEME of Crist, manslaughter, and wast also
Of catel and of tyme; and forthermo,
It is repreeve and contrarie of honour
for to ben holde a commune hasardour;
And ever the hyer he is of estaat,
The moore is he holden desolaat.
If that a prynce useth hasardrye
In alle governaunce and policye,
He is, as by commune opinioun,
Yholde the lasse in reputacioun.
Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,
Was sent to Corynthe, in ful greet honour,
fro Lacidomye, to maken hire alliaunce;
And whan he cam, hym happede, par chaunce,
That alle the gretteste that were of that lond
Pleyynge atte hasard he hem fond,
for which, as soone as it myghte be,
He stal hym hoom agayn to his contree,
And seyde, Ther wol I nat lese my name,
Ne I wol nat take on me so greet defame,
Yow for to allie unto none hasardours;
Sendeth som othere wise embassadours;
for, by my trouthe, me were levere dye,
Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye;
for ye that been so glorious in honours,
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours
As by my wyl, ne as by my trettee.
This wise philosophe thus seyde hee.
Looke eek that, to the kyng Demetrius,
The kyng of Parthes, as the book seith us,
Sente him a paire of dees of gold, in scorn,
for he hadde used hasard therbiforn;
for which he heeld his glorie or his renoun
At no value or reputacioun.
Lordes may fynden oother maner pley
Honeste ynough to dryve the day away.
O wol I speke of othes false and grete
A word or two, as olde bookes trete.
Gret sweryng is a thyng abhominable,
And fals sweryng is yet moore repreevable.
The heighe God forbad sweryng at al,
Witnesse on Mathew; but in special
Of sweryng seith the hooly Jeremye,
Thou shalt seye sooth thyne othes, and nat lye,
And swere in doom, and eek in rightwisnesse;
But ydel sweryng is a cursednesse.
Bihoold and se, that in the firste table
Of heighe Goddes heestes honourable,
How that the seconde heeste of hym is this:

The
Pardoners
Tale

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Take nat my name in ydel, or amys.
Lo, rather he forbedeth swich sweryng
Than homycide, or many a cursed thyng;
I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stondeth:
This knowen, that his heestes understondeth,
How that the seconde beeste of God is that.
And forther over, I wol thee telle al plat
That vengeance shal nat parten from his hous,
That of his othes is to outrageous:
By Goddes precious herte, and by his nayles,
And by the blood of Crist that is in Hayles,
Sevene is my chaunce, and thyn is cynk and treye;
By Goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,
This daggere shal thurghout thyn herte go!
This fruyt cometh of the biched bones two,
Forsweryng, ire, falsnesse, homycide.
Now for the love of Crist that for us dyde,
Lete youre othes, bothe grete and smale.
But, sires, now wol I telle forth my tale.

HISE riotours thre, of whiche I
telle,
Longe erst er prime rong of any belle,
Were set hem in a tavern for to
drynke;
And as they sat, they herde a belle
clynke

Biforn a cors, was carried to his grave.
That oon of hem gan callen to his knave:
Go bet, quod he, and axe redily,
What cors is this that passeth heer forby;
And looke that thou reporte his name weel.
Sire, quod this boy, it nedeth neveradeel,
It was me toold, er ye cam heer, two houres;
He was, pardee, an old felawe of youre,
And sodeynly he was yslayn tonyght,
fordronke, as he sat on his bench upright;
Ther cam a privee theef, men clepeth Deeth,
That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
And with his spere he smoot his herte atwo,
And wente his wey withouten wordes mo.
He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence:
And, maister, er ye come in his presence,
Me thynketh that it were necessarie
for to be war of swich an adversarie;
Beth redy for to meete hym everemoore;
Thus taughte me my dame; I sey namoore.
By Seinte Marie! seyde this taverner,
The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this yeer,
Henne over a mile, withinne a greet village,
Bothe man and womman, child, and hyne, & page;
I trowe his habitacioun be there;
To been avysed greet wysdom it were,
Er that he dide a man a dishonour.
Ye, Goddes armes! quod this riotour,
Is it swich peril with hym for to meete?
I shal hym seke by wey and eek by strete,
I make avow to Goddes digne bones!
Herkneth, felawes, we thre been al ones;
Lat ech of us holde up his hand til oother,
And ech of us bicomem ootheres brother,
And we wol sleen this false traytour, Deeth;
He shal be slayn, which that so many sleeth,
By Goddes dignitee, er it be nyght!

GODRES han thise thre hir trouthes
plight,
To lyve and dyen ech of hem for oother,
As though he were his owene yboren brother;
And up they sturte al dronken, in this rage,
And forth they goon towardes that village
Of which the taverner hadde spoke biforn;
And many a grisly ooth thanne han they sworn,
And Cristes blessed body they torente;
Deeth shal be deed, if that they may hym hente.
And han they han goon nat fully half a mile,
Right as they wolde han troden over a
stile,

An oold man and a povre with hem mette.
This oold man ful mekely hem grette,
And seyde thus: Now, lordes, God yow see!
The proudeste of thisse riotours thre
Answerde agayn: What? carl with sory grace,
Why artow al forwrapped save thy face?
Why lyvestow so longe in so greet age?
This oold man gan looke in his visage,
And seyde thus: For I ne kan nat fynde
A man, though that I walked into Ynde,
Neither in citee nor in no village,
That wolde chaunge his youthe for myn age;
And therfore moot I han myn age stille,
As longe tyme as it is Goddes wille.
Ne Deeth, alas! ne wol nat han my lyf;
Thus walke I, lyk a resteles kaityf,
And on the ground, which is my moodres gate,
I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and late,
And seye: Leve mooder, leet me in!
Lo, how I vanysshe, flessch, and blood, and shyn;
Alas! whan shul my bones been at reste?
Mooder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste,
That in my chambre longe tyme hath be,
Yef for an heyre clowt to wrappe me!
But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
for which ful pale and welked is my face.
But, sires, to yow it is no curteisye
To speken to an oold man vileynye,
But he trespassse in word, or elles in dede.
In hooly writ ye may yourself wel rede,
Agayns an oold man hoor upon his heed,
Ye sholde arise; wherfore I yeve yow reed,
Ne dooth unto an oold man noon harm now,
Namoore than ye wolde men did to yow
In age, if that ye so longe abyde;
And God be with yow wher ye go or ryde;
I moot go thider as I have to go.

NHY, olde cherl, by God, thou shalt nat so!
Seyde this oother hasardour anon;
Thou partest nat so lightly, by Seint John!
Thou spak right now of thilke traytour, Deeth,
That in this contree alle oure freendes sleeth;
Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his espye,
Telle wher he is, or thou shalt it abyde,
By God, and by the hooly sacrament!
for soothly thou art oon of his assent,
To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef!
Now, sires, quod he, if that ye be so leef
To fynde Deeth, turne up this croked wey,
for in that grove I lafte hym, by my fey,

Under a tree, and there he wole abyde;
Nat for youre boost he wole him nothyng hyde.
Se ye that ook? Right there ye shal hym fynde.
God save yow, that boghte agayn mankynde,
And yow amende! Thus seyde this olde man.
And everich of thisse riotours ran
Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde
Of floryns fyne of gold yecoynd rounde
Wel ny an eighte bussshels, as hem thoughte.
No lenger thanne after Deeth they soughte,
But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
for that the floryns been so faire and brighte,
That down they sette hem by this precious hoord.
The worst of hem he spak the firste word.
BETTEREN, quod he, taak kepe what I
seye;

My wit is greet, though that I bourde and
pleye.
This tresor hath fortune unto us yiven,
In myrthe and jolitee oure lyf to lyven,
And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.
Eyl! Goddes precious dignitee! who wende
Today, that we sholde han so fair a grace?
But myghte this gold be caried fro this place
To myn hous, or elles unto youre,
for wel ye woot that al this gold is oures,
Channe were we in heigh felicittee.
But trewely, by daye it may nat bee;
Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,
And for oure owene tresor doon us honge.
This tresor moste ycaried be by nyghte,
As wisely and as slyly as it myghte.
Wherfore, I rede that cut among us alle
Be drawe, and lat se wher the cut wol falle;
And he that hath the cut, with herte blithe
Shal renne to the towne, and that ful swithe,
And brynge us breed and wyn ful prively;
And two of us shul kepen subtilly
This tresor wel; and if he wol nat tarie,
Whan it is nyght, we wol this tresor carie
By oon assent, wheras us thynketh best.
That oon of hem the cut broghte in his fest,
And bad hem drawe and looke wher it wol falle;
And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle;
And forth toward the toun he wente anon.

ND al so soone as that he was agon,
That oon of hem spak thus unto that
oother:
Thow knowest wel thou art my sworne brother;
Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
Thou woost wel that oure felawe is agon,
And heere is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
That shal departed been among us thre.
But nathelees, if I kan shape it so,
That it departed were among us two,
Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to thee?
That oother answerde, Inoot how that may be;
he woot how that the gold is with us tweye;
What shal we doon, what shal we to hym seye?
Shal it be conseil? seyde the firste shrewe,
And I shal tellen in a wordes fewe
What we shal doon, and brynge it wel aboute.
I graunte, quod that oother, out of doute,
h4

That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat biwrewe.
Now, quod the firste, thou woost wel we be
tweye,
And two of us shul strenger be than oon.
Looke whan that he is set, and right anon
Hrys, as though thou woldest with hym pleye,
And I shal ryve hym thurgh the sydes tweye
Whil that thou strogelest with hym as in game,
And with thy dagger looke thou do the same,
And thanne shal al this gold departed be,
My deere freend, bitwixen me and thee.
Channe may we bothe oure lustes al fulfille,
And pleye at dees right at oure owene wille.
And thus acorded been thisse shrewes tweye,
To sleen the thridd, as ye han herd me seye.

HIS yongeste, which that wente unto the
toun,
ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and down
The beautee of thisse floryns newe and brighte.
O Lord! quod he, if so were that I myghte
Have al this tresor to myself allone,
Ther is no man that lyveth under the trone
Of God, that sholde lyve so murry as I!
And atte laste the feend, oure enemy,
Putte in his thought that he sholde poyson beye,
With which he myghte sleen his felawes tweye;
for why the feend foond hym in swich lyvyng,
That he hadde leve hym to sorwe brynge,
for this was outrely his fulle entente
To sleen hem bothe, and nevere to repente.
And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
Into the toun, unto a pothecarie,
And preyde hym that he hym wolde selle
Som poyson, that he myghte his rattes quelle;
And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe,
That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde yslawe,
And fayn he wolde wreke hym, if he myghte,
On vermyn, that destroyed him by nyghte.
The pothecarie answerde, And thou shalt have
A thyng that, al so God my soule save!
In al this world ther nis no creature,
That ete or dronke hath of this confiture,
Noght but the montance of a corn of whete,
That he ne shal his lif anon forlete;
Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lasse while
Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a mile,
This poyson is so strong and violent.

HIS cursed man hath in his hond yhent
This poyson in a box, and sith he ran
Into the nexte strete, unto a man,
And borwed of hym large botels thre,
And in the two his poyson poured he;
The thridd he kept clene for his owene drynke;
for al the nyght he shoop hym for to swynke
In caryinge of the gold out of that place.
And whan this riotour, with sory grace
Hadde filled with wyn his grete botels thre,
To his felawes agayn repaireth he.

WHAT nedeth it to sermone of it moore?
for right as they hadde cast his deeth
bifoore,
Right so they han hym slayn, and that anon;
And whan that this was doon thus spak that oon:
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Now lat us sitte and drynke, & make us merie,
And afterward we wol his body berie.
And with that word it happed hym, par cas,
To take the botel ther the poyson was,
And drank and yaf his felawe drynke also,
For which anon they storven bothe two.

But certes, I suppose that Hyycen
Wroot nevere in no canon, ne in no fen,
Mo wonder signes of empoisonyng
Than hadde these wrecches two, er hir endyng.
Thus ended been these homycides two,
And eek the false empoysoner also.

CURSED synne, ful of cursednesse!
O traytours homycide! O wikkednesse!
O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye!
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileynye
And othes grete, of usage and of pride!
Alas! mankynde, how may it bitide,
That to thy Creatour which that the wroghte,
And with his precious herte/blood thee boghte,
Thou art so fals and so unkynde, alas!

NOW, goode men, God foryeve yow
your trespass,
And ware yow fro the synne of
avarice.
Myn hooly pardoun may yow alle
warice,

So that ye offre nobles, or sterlynges,
Or elles silver broches, spoones, rynges.
Boweth youre heed under this hooly bulle!
Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of youre wolles!
Your names I entre heer in my rolle anon;
Into the blisse of hevne shul ye gon;
I yow assoille by myn heigh power,
Yow that wol offre, as clene and eek as cleer
As ye were born; and lo, sires, thus I preche.
And Jhesu Crist, that is oure soules leche,
So graunte yow his pardoun to receyve;
For that is best; I wol yow nat deceyve.

BUT, sires, o word forgot I in my tale;
I have reliques & pardoun in my male,
As faire as any man in Engeland,
Whiche were me yeven by the popes
bond.

If any of yow wole, of devocioun,
Offren, and han myn absolucoun,
Cometh forth anon, and kneleth heere adoun,
And mekely receyveh my pardoun;
Or elles taketh pardoun as ye wende,
Al newe and fressh, at every miles ende,
So that ye offren alwey newe and newe
Nobles or pens, whiche that be goode and trewe.
It is an honour to everich that is heer
That ye mowe have a suffisant Pardoneer
Tassoille yow, in contree as ye ryde,
for adventures whiche that may bityde.
Paraventure ther may fallen oon or two
Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke atwo.
Looke which a seuretee is it to yow alle
That I am in youre felaweship yfalle,
That may assoille yow, bothe moore and lasse,
Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe.
I rede that oure Hoost heere shal bigynne,

for he is moost enveloped in synne.
Com forth, sire Hoost, and offre first anon,
And thou shalt hisse my reliques everychon,
Ye, for a grote! unbokele anon thy purs.

NAY, quod he, thanne have I Cristes curs!
Lat be, quod he, it shal nat be, so theech!
Thou woldest make me kisse thyn olde
brech,

And swere it were a relyk of a seint,
Though it were with thy fundement depeint!
But, by the croys which that Seint Eleyne fond,
I wolde I hadde thy coillons in myn hond
Instide of reliques or of seintuarie.

Lat kutte hem of, I wol with thee hem carie,
They shul be shryned in an hogges toord.

THIS Pardoner answerde nat a word;
So wrooth he was, no word ne wolde he seye.
Now, quod oure Hoost, I wol no longer
pleye

With thee, ne with noon oother angry man.
But right anon the worthy Knyght bigan,
Whan that he saugh that al the peple lough:

MORE of this, for it is right ynough!
Sire Pardoner, be glad and myrie of cheere;
And ye, sir Hoost, that been to me so deere,

I prey yow that ye kisse the Pardoner.
And Pardoner, I prey thee drawe thee neer,
And as we diden, lat us laughe and pleye.

Anon they kiste, and ryden forth hir weye.
Here is ended the Pardoners Tale.

The prologe of the Wyves Tale of Bath.

EXPERIENCE, though
noon auctoritee
Were in this world, were
right ynough to me
To speke of wo that is in
marriage;
For, lordynges, sith I twelf
yeer was of age,
Thonked be God, that is
eterne on lyve!

Housbondes at chirche-dore I have had fyve;
for I so ofte have ywedded bee;
And alle were worthy men in hir degree.
But me was toold certeyn, nat longe agoon is,
That sith that Crist ne wente nevere but onis
To weddyng in the Cane of Galilee,
That by the same ensample taughte he me
That I ne sholde wedded be but ones.
Herke eek, lo! which a sharp word for the nones!
Beside a welle Jhesus, God and man,
Spak in repreeve of the Samaritan:
Thou hast yhad fyve housbondes, quod he,
And thilke man, the which that hath now thee,
Is noght thyn housbonde. Thus seyde he
certeyn;

What that he mente therby, I kan nat seyn;
But that I axe, why that the fiftre man
Was noon housbonde to the Samaritan?
How manye myghte she have in marriage?
Yet herde I nevere tellen in myn age
Upon this nombre diffinioun.

Men may devyne, and glosen up and doun,
But wel I woot, expres, withoute lye,
God bad us for to wece and multiplye.
That gentil text kan I wel understonde;
Eek wel I woot he seyde, myn housbonde
Sholde lete fader and mooder, and take me;
But of no nombre mencoun made he,
Of bigamy, or of octogamy;

Why sholde men speke of it vileynye?
O, heere the wise kyng, daun Salomon;
I trowe he hadde wyves mo than oon;

As, wolde God, it leveful were to me
To be refreshed half so ofte as he!
Which yifte of God hadde he for alle his wyvys!

No man hath swich, that in this world alyve is,
God woot, this noble kyng, as to my wit,
The firste nyght had many a myrie fit

With ech of hem, so wel was hym on lyve.
Blessed be God, that I have wedded fyve!
Welcome the sixte, whan that evere he shal!

For sothe, I wol nat kepe me chaast in al;
Whan myn housbonde is fro the world ygon,
Som cristen man shal wedde me anon;

for thanne tha postle seith that I am free
To wedde, a Goddes half, wher it liketh me.
He seith that to be wedded is no synne.

But is it to be wedded than to brynne?
What reketh me thogh folk seye vileynye
Of shrewed Lameth and his bigamy?

I woot wel Abraham was an hooly man,
And Jacob eek, as ferforth as I kan;
And ech of hem hadde wyves mo than two;

And many another holy man also.
Whanne saugh ye evere, in any manere age,
That hye God defended marriage

By expres word? I pray you telleteh me;
Or where comanded he virginitee?
I woot as wel as ye, it is no drede,

Whan tha postel speket of maydenhede,
he seyde, that precept therof hadde he noon.
Men may conseil a womman to been oon,

But conseil ying is nat comandement.
He putte it in oure owene juggement;
for hadde God comanded maydenhede,

Thanne hadde he dampned weddyng with the
dede;

And certes, if ther were no seed ysowe,
Virginitee, wherof thanne sholde it growe?
Doul dorste nat comanden atte leeste,

A thyng of which his maister yaf noon heeste.
The dard is set up for virginitee;
Cacche whoso may, who renneth best lat see!

BUT this word is nat taken of every wight,
But ther as God lust gyve it of his myght.
I woot wel that tha postel was a mayde;

But nathelees, thogh that he wroot and sayde
he wolde that every wight were swich as he,
Allys but conseil to virginitee;

And for to been a wyf, he yaf me leve
Of indulgence; so it is no repreeve
To wedde me, if that my make dye,

Withouthen excepcioun of bigamy,
Al were it good no womman for to touche,

he mente as in his bed or in his couche;
for peril is bothe fyr and tow tassemble;
Ye knowe what this ensample may resemble.
This al and som, he heeld virginitee
Moore profiteth than weddyng in freletee;
freletee clepe I, but if that he and she
Wolde leden al hir lyf in chastitee.

I graunte it wel, I have noon envye
Thogh maydenhede preferre bigamy;
hem liketh to be clene, body and goost.
Of myn estaat I nyl nat make no boost,
for wel ye knowe, a lord in his houshold,
he nath nat every vessel al of gold;

Somme been of tree, and doon hir lord servyse.
God clepeth folk to hym in sondry wyse,
And everich bath of God a propre yifte,

Som this, som that, as hym liketh to shifte.
VIRGINITEE is greet perfeccioun,
And continence eek with devocioun;

But Crist, that of perfeccioun is weile,
Bad nat every wight he sholde go selle
All that he hadde, and gyve it to the poore.

And in swich wise folwe hym and his foore.
he spak to hem that wolde lyve parfitly;
And, lordynges, by youre leve, that am nat I.

I wol bistowe the flour of al myn age
In the actes and in fruyt of mariage.
Telle me also, to what conclusioun

Were membres maad of generacioun,
And for what profit was a wight ywroght?
Trusteth right wel, they were nat maad for noght.

Glose whoso wole, and seye bothe up and doun,
That they were makyd for purgacioun
Of uryne, and oure bothe thynges smale,

Were eek to knowe a femele from a male,
And for noon oother cause; seye ye no?
The experience woot wel it is noght so;

So that the clerkes be nat with me wrothe,
I seye this, that they maked been for bothe;
This is to seye, for office, and for ese

Of engendrure, ther we nat God displese.
Why sholde men elles in hir bookes sette
That man shal yelde to his wyf hire dette?

Now wherwith sholde he make his paiement,
If he ne used his sely instrument?
Thanne were they maad upon a creature,

To purge uryne, and eek for engendrure.
But I seye noght that every wight is holde,
That hath swich harneys as I to yow tolde,

To goon and usen hem in engendrure;
Than sholde men take of chastitee no cure.
Crist was a mayde, and shapen as a man,

And many a seint, sith that the world bigan,
Yet lyved they evere in parfit chastitee.
I nyl nat envye no virginitee;

Lat hem be breed of pure whete/seed,
And lat us wyves hoten barly/breed;
And yet with barly/breed, Mark telle kan,

Oure Lord Jhesu refreshed many a man.
In swich estaat as God hath cleped us
I wol persevere, I nam nat precius;

In wyfhode I wol use myn instrument
As frely as my Makere hath it sent.

If I be daungerous, God yeve me sorwe;
Myn housbonde shal it have bothe eve and morwe;
Whan that hym list com forth and paye his dette.
An housbonde I wol have, I nyl nat lette,
Which shal be bothe my dettour and my thral,
And have his tribulacioun withal
Upon his flessch, whil that I am his wyf.
I have the power duryng al my lyf
Upon his propre body, and noght he.
Right thus the Apostel tolde it unto me,
And bad oure housbondes for to love us weel;
At this sentence me liketh every deel.

Whirte the Pardoner, and that anon;
Now, dame, quod he, by God and by
Seint John,

Ye been a noble prechour in this cas!
I was aboute to wedde a wyf; alas!
What, sholde I bye it on my flessch so
deere?

Yet hadde I levere wedde no wyf toyeere!

BYDE, quod she, my tale is nat bigonne.

Nay, thou shalt drynken of another tonne,

Er that I go, shal savoure wors than ale.

And whan that I have toold thee forth my tale

Of tribulacioun in mariage,

Of which I am expert in al myn age,

This to seyn, myself have been the whippe;

Than maystow chese whether thou wolt sippe

Of thilke tonne that I shal abroche.

Be war of it, er thou to ny approche;

for I shal tell ensamples mo than ten.

Whoso that nyl be war by othere men,

By hym shul othere men corrected be.

The same wordes writeth Ptholomee;

Rede it in his Almageste, and take it there.

Dame, I wolde pray yow, if youre wyl it were,

Seyde this Pardoner, as ye bigan

Telle forth youre tale; spareth for no man,

And teche us yonge men of youre practive.

Gladly, quod she, sith it may yow like;

But yet I praye to al this compaignye,

If that I speke after my fantasye,

As taketh not agrief of that I seye;

for myn entente nis but for to pleye.

Oll sires, now wol I telle forth my

tale.

As evere moote I drynken wyn or ale,

I shal seye sooth, tho housbondes

that I hadde,

As thre of hem were goode, and two

were badde.

The thre were goode men and riche, and olde;

Annethe myghte they the statut holde

In which that they were bounden unto me;

Ye woot wel what I meene of this, pardee!

As help me God, I laughe whan I thynke

How pitously anyght I made hem swynke!

And, by my fey, I tolde of it no stoor.

They had me yeven hir gold and hir tresoor;

Me neded nat do lenger diligence

To wynne hir love, or doon hem reverence;

They loved me so wel, by God above,

That I ne tolde no deynthe of hir love!

A wys womman wol sette hire evere in oon
To gete hire love, theras she hath noon;
But sith I hadde hem hoolly in myn hond,
And sith they hadde me yeven all hir lond,
What sholde I taken heede hem for to plesse,
But it were for my profit and myn ese?
I sette hem so a werke, by my fey,
That many a nyght they songen Weilaway!
The bacoun was nat fet for hem, I trowe,
That som men han in Essex at Dunmowe.
I governed hem so wel after my lawe,
That ech of hem ful blisful was and fawe
To bryng me gaye thynges fro the fayre;
They were ful glad whan I spak to hem faire,
for, God it woot, I chidde hem spytously.

Oll herkneth how I baar me proprely,
Ye wise wyves, that kan understonde.
Thus shul ye speke, and bere hem wrong
on honde;

for half so boldely kan ther no man

Swere and lyen as a woman kan.

I sey nat this by wyves that been wyse,

But if it be whan they hem mysayve.

A wys wyf shal, if that she kan hir good,

Bere hym on honde that the cow is wood,

And take witesse of hir owene mayde

Of hir assent; but herkneth how I sayde.

Sire, olde kaynard, is this thyn array?

Why is my neighebores wyf so gay?

She is honoured over al ther she gooth;

I sitte at hoom, I have no thyrty clooth.

What dostow at my neighebores hous?

Is she so fair? artow so amorous?

What rowne ye with oure mayde? Benedicite!

Sire olde lechour, lat thy japes be!

And if I have a gossib or a frend,

Withouthen gilt, thou chidest as a feend

If that I walke or pleye unto his hous.

Thou comest hoom as dronken as a mous,

And prechest on thy bench, with yvel preef:

Thou seist to me, it is a greet meschief

To wedde a povre womman, for costage;

And if that she be riche, of heigh parage,

Channe seistow that it is a tormentrie

To soffre hire pride and hire malencolie;

And if that she be faire, thou verray knave,

Thou seyst that every holour wol hire have;

She may no while in chastitee abyde

That is assailed upon ech a syde.

HOU seyst som folk desire us for richesse,

Somme for oure shap, and somme for oure

fairnesse,

And som, for she kan outhir synge or daunce,

And som, for gentillesse and daliaunce;

Som, for hir bandes and hir armes smale;

Thus goth al to the devel by thy tale!

Thou seyst, men may nat kepe a castel wal;

It may so longe assailed been over al.

And if that she be foul, thou seist that she

Coveiteth every man that she may se;

for as a spaynel she wol on hym lepe,

Til that she fynde som man hire to chepe;

Ne noon so grey goos gooth ther in the lake,

As, seistow, that wol been withoute make.
And seyst, it is an hard thyng for to welde
A thyng that no man wole, his thanks, helde.
Thus seistow, lorel, whan thou goost to bedde,
And that no wys man nedeth for to wedde,
Ne no man that entendeth unto hevenc.
With wilde thonder dynt and firy levenc
Moote thy welked nekke be to broke!
Thow seyst that droppynge houses, and eek

smoke,

And chidyng wyves, maken men to flec

Out of hir owene house; a! benedicitee!

What eyleth swich an old man for to chide?

Thow seyst we wyves wol our vices hide

Til we be fast, and thanne we wol hem shewe;

Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe.

Thou seist, that oxen, asses, hors, and houndes,

They been assayed at diverse stoundes;

They been assayed, er that men hem bye,

Bacyns, lavoures, and al swich housbondrye,

And so been pottes, clothes, and array;

But folk of wyves maken noon assay

Til they be wedded; olde dotard shrewe!

And thanne, seistow, we wol our vices shewe.

Thou seist also, that it displeth me

But if that thou wolt preye my beautee,

And but thou poure alway upon my face;

And clepe me, faire dame, in every place;

And but thou make a feeste on thilke day

That I was born, and make me fressh and gay;

And but thou do to my norice honour,

And to my chamberere withinne my bour,

And to my fadres folk and his allies;

Thus seistow, olde bareful of lyes!

Nyet of oure apprentice Janekyn,

for his crisp heer, shynynge as gold so fyn,

And for he squiereth me bothe up and down,

Yet hastow caught a fals suspicioun;

I wol hym noght, though thou were deed to-morwe!

But tel me this, why hydestow, with sorwe,

The keyes of thy cheste away fro me?

It is my good, as wel as thyn, pardee!

What! wenestow make an ydiot of oure dame?

Now, by that lord that called is Seint Jame,

Thou shalt nat bothe, though that thou were wood,

Be maister of my body and of my good;

That oon thou shalt forgo, maugree thynne eyen!

What nedeth thee of me tenquere or spyen?

I trowe, thou woldest loken in thy chiste!

Thou sholdest seye: Wyf, go wher thee liste;

Tak your disport, I wol nat leve no talys;

I knowe yow for a trewe wyf, dame Alye.

We love no man that taketh kepe or charge

Wher that we goon; we wol ben at oure large.

Alle men yblessed moot he be,

The wise astrologer, Daun Ptholome,

That seith this proverbe in his Almageste,

Of alle men his wysdom is hyeste

That reketh nevere who hath the world in honde.

By this proverbe thou shalt understonde,

Have thou ynogh, what thar thee recche or care

How myrily that othere folk fare?

for certeyn, olde dotard, by youre leve,

Ye shul have queynte right ynogh at eve.
He is to greet a nygard that wol werne
A man to lighte his candle at his lanterne;
He shal have never the lasse light, pardee!
Have thou ynogh, thee thar nat pleyne thee.

HOU seyst also, that if we make us gay

With clothing, and with precious array,

That it is peril of oure chastitee;

And yet, with sorwe, thou most enforce thee,

And seye these wordes in thapostles name:

In habit maad with chastitee and shame

Ye wommen shul apparaille yow, quod he,

And noght in tressed heer, and gay perree,

As perles, ne with gold, ne clothes riche.

After thy text, ne after thy rubriche,

I wol nat wirche as muchel as a gnat.

Thou seydest this, that I was lyk a cat;

for whoso wolde senge a cattles skyn,

Thanne wolde the cat wel dwellen in his in;

And if the cattles skyn be slyk and gay,

She wol nat dwelle in house half a day;

But forth she wole, er any day be dawed,

To shewe hir skyn, and goon a caterwawed;

This is to seye, if I be gay, sire shrewe,

I wol renne out, my borel for to shewe.

SIRE olde fool, what eyleth thee to spyen?

Thogh thou preye Argus with his hundred

eyen

To be my wardecors, as he kan best,

In feith, he shal nat kepe me but me lest;

Yet koude I make his berd, so moot I thee!

Thou seydest eek, that ther been thynges thre,

The whiche thynges troublen al this erthe,

And that no wight ne may endure the ferthe.

O leve sire shrewe, Jhesu shorte thy lyf!

Yet prechestow, and seyst, an hateful wyf

Yrekened is for oon of thise meschances.

Ben ther none othere maner resemblances

That ye may likne youre parables to,

But if a sely wyf be oon of tho?

Thou liknest eek wommanes love to helle,

To bareyne lond, ther water may nat dwelle;

Thou liknest it also to wilde fyr,

The moore it brenneth, the moore it hath desir

To consume every thyng that brent wole be;

Thou seyst, that right as wormes shende a tree,

Right so a wyf destroyeth hire housbonde;

This knowe they that been to wyves bonde.

FORDYNGES, right thus as ye have un-

derstonde,

Baar I stiffly myne olde housbondes on

honde,

That thus they seyden in hir dronkenesse;

And al was fals, but that I took witesse

On Janekyn, and on my nece also.

O Lord, the peyne I dide hem and the wol

ful giltelees, by Goddes sweete pyne!

for as an hors I koude byte and whyne;

I koude pleyne, thogh I were in the gilt,

Or elles often tyme hadde I been spilt.

Whoso that first to mille comth, first grynt;

I pleynd first, so was oure werre ystynt;

They were ful glad to excusen hem ful blyve

I O wot I spoken of my fourthe
housbonde.
My fourthe housbonde was a
revelour;
This is to seyn, he hadde a para-
mour;
And I was yong and ful of ragerye,
Stribourne and strong, and joly as a pye.
Wel koude I daunce to an harpe smale,
And synge, ywis, as any nyghtyngale,
Whan I had dronke a draughte of sweete wyn.
Metellius, the foule cherl, the swyn,
That with a staf biraftt his wyf hire lyf,
For he drank wyn; thogh I hadde been his wyf
He sholde nat han daunted me fro drynke;
And after wyn, on Venus moste I thynke;
for al so siker as cold engendreth hayl,
A likerous mouth moste han a likerous tayl.
In women vinolent is no defence,
This knowen leccours by experience.
But, Lord Crist! whan that it remembreth me
Upon my yowthe, and on my solitee,
It tikleth me aboute myn herte roote!
Unto this day it dooth myn herte boote
That I have had my world as in my tyme.
But age, alas! that al wole envenyme,
Hath me biraftt my beautee and my pith;
Lat go, farewel, the devel go therwith!
The flour is goon, ther is namooore to telle,
The bren, as I best kan, now moste I selle;
But yet to be right myrie wol I fonde.
N O wot I tellen of my fourthe housbonde,
I seye, I hadde in herte greet despit
That he of any oother had delit;
But he was quit, by God and by Seint Jocel
I made hym of the same wode a croce,
Nat of my body in no foul manere,
But certainly, I made Folk swich cheere,
That in his owene grece I made hym frye
for angre, and for verray jalousye.
By God, in erthe I was his purgatorie,
for which I hope his soule be in glorie!
for God it woot, he sat ful ofte and song
Whan that his shoo ful bitterly hym wrong.
Ther was no wight, save God and he, that wastite,
In many wise, how soore I hym twistite.
He deyde whan I cam fro Jerusalem;
And lith ygrave under the roode-beem;
Al is his tombe noght so curyus
As was the sepulchre of hym, Daryus,
Whiche that Appelles wroghte subtilly;
It nys but wast to burye hym preciously.
Lat hym fare wel, God yewe his soule reste,
He is now in his grave and in his cheste!
N O wot of my fifthe housbonde wol I telle,
God lete his soule nevere come in helle!
And yet was he to me the mooste shrewd
That feele I on my ribbes al by rewe,
And evere shal, unto myn endyng day.
But in our bed he was ful fressh and gay;
And therwithal so wel koude he me glose,
Whan that he wolde han my bele chose,
That thogh he hadde me bet on every bon,

He koude wynde hym beste for that he
 I rowe I loved hym daungerous to me.
 Was of his love daungerous to me.
 Was women han, if that I shal nat lye,
 In this matere a queynte fantasie;
 Mayte what thyng we may nat lightly have,
 Therafter wol we crie al day and crave.
 Forbede us thyng, and that desiren we;
 Presse on us faste, and thanne wol we fle.
 With daunger oute we al oure chaffare;
 Greet prees at market maketh deere ware,
 And to greet cheepe is holde at litel prys;
 This knoweth every woman that is wys.
 Y firste housbonde, God his soule
 bless!
 Which that I took for love, and no
 richesse,
 He som tyme was a clerk of Oxen-
 ford,
 And hadde left scole, and wente at hom to bord
 With my gossib, dwellinge in oure toun;
 God have hir soule! hir name was Hlisoun.
 She knew myn herte, and eek my priyete,
 Bet than oure parisshe/preest, as moot I thee.
 To hire biwreyed I my conseil al;
 For hadde myn housbonde pissed on a wal,
 Or doon a thyng that sholde han cost his lyf,
 To hire, and to another worthy wyf,
 And to my nece, which that I loved weel,
 I wolde han toold his conseil every deel.
 And so I dide ful often, God it woot,
 That made his face ful often rede and hoot
 For verray shame, and blamed hymself for he
 Had toold to me so greet a pryvete.
 And so bifel that ones, in a Lente,
 So often tymes I to my gossyb wente,
 For evere yet I loved to be gay,
 And for to walke, in March, Averill and May,
 And for to hous, to here sondry talys,
 That Jankyn clerk, and my gossyb, dame Hlys,
 And I myself, into the feeldes wente.
 Myn housbonde was at London al that Lente;
 I hadde the better leysur for to pleye,
 And for to se, and eek for to be seye
 Of lusty folk: what wiste I wher my grace
 Was shapen for to be, or in what place?
 Therefore I made my visitaciouns
 To vigilies and to processiouns,
 To prechyng eek, and to thise pilgrimages,
 To pleyes of myrcles, and to mariages,
 And wered upon my gaye scarlet gytes.
 These wormes, ne thise motthes, ne thise mytes
 Upon my peril, frete hem never a deel;
 And wostow why? For they were used weel.
 O wol I tellen forth what happed me.
 I seye that in the feeldes walked we
 Till trewely we hadde swich daliance,
 This clerk and I, that of my purveiance
 Ispak to hym, and seyde hym, how that he,
 If I were wydde, sholde wedde me;
 For certainly, I sey for no bobance,
 Yet was I never withouten purveiance
 Of mariage, nof othere thynges eek.

I holde a mouses herte nat worth a leek
That hath but oon hole for to sterre to,
And if that faille, thanne is al ydo.
¶ I bar hym on honde he hadde enchanted me,
My dame taughte me that soutiltee,
And eek I seyde, I mette of hym al nyght,
He wolde han slayn me as I lay upright,
And al my bed was ful of verray blood,
But yet I hope that he shal do me good;
for blood bitokeneth gold, as me was taught;
And al was fals, I dremed of it right naught,
But as I folwed ay my dames loore,
As wel of this as othere thynges moore.
¶ But now, sire, lat me se, what I shal seyn?
Al hal by God, I have my tale ageyn.
¶ Whan that my fourthe housbonde was on beere
I weep algate, and made sory cheere,
As wywes mooten, for it is usage,
And with my coverchief covered my visage;
But, for that I was purveyed of a make,
I wepte but smal, and that I undertake.
¶ Chirche was myn housbonde born amowre,
With neighbores, that for hym maden sorwe;
And Jankyn,oure clerk, was oon of tho.
He help me God, whan that I saugh hym go
After the beere, me thoughte he hadde a paire
Of legges and of feet so cleene and faire,
That al myn herte I yaf unto his hood.
He was, I trowe, a twenty wynter oold,
And I was fourty, if I shal aye sooth;
But yet I hadde alwey a coltes tooth.
Gat-tothed I was, and that bicam me weel,
I hadde the prente of seint Venus seel.
He help me God, I was a lusty oon,
And faire, and riche, and yong, and wel bigon;
And trewely, as myne housbondes tolde me,
I hadde the beste quoniam myghte be;
for certes, I am al Venerien
In feelynge, and myn herte is Marcien.
Venus me yaf my lust, my likerousnesse,
And Mars yaf me my sturdy hardynesse.
Myn ascendent was Taur, and Mars therinne.
Alas! alas! that evere love was synne!
I folwed ay myn inclinacioun
By vertu of my constellacioun,
That made me I koude noght withdrawe
My chambre of Venus from a good felawe.
Yet have I Martes mark upon my face,
And also in another, privee, place,
for, God so wys be my savacioun,
I ne loved nevere by no discrecioun,
But evere folwede myn appetit,
Al were he short, or long, or blak, or whyt;
I took no kepe, so that he liked me,
How poore he was, ne eek of what degree.
¶ HAT sholde I seye, but at the monthes
ende
¶ This joly clerk, Jankyn, that was so hende,
Hath wedded me with greet solempanytee,
And to hym yaf I all the lond and fee,
That evere was me yeven ther bifore;
But afterward repented me ful soore.
He holde suffre nothyng of my list.

The Tale
of the
Wife of
Bath

By God, he smoot me ones, on the lyst,
for that I rente out of his book a leef,
That of the strook myn ere wax al deef.
Stribourne I was as is a leonesse,
And of my tonge a verray jangleresse;
And walke I wolde, as I had doon biforn,
from hous to hous, although he had it sworn;
for which he often tymes wolde preche,
And me of olde Romayn geestes teche;
How he, Symplicius Gallus, lefte his wyf,
And hire forsok for terme of al his lyf,
Noght but for open/heveded he hir say
Lokynge out at his dore upon a day.
Another Romayn tolde he me by name,
That, for his wyf was at a someres game
Withouthen his wityng, he forsook hire eke.
And thanne wolde he upon his Bible seke
That ilke proverbe of Ecclesiaste,
Where he comandeth and forbedeth faste,
Man shal nat suffre his wyf go roule aboute;
Thanne wolde he seyrigh thus, withouten doute:
Whoso that buyldeth his hous al of salwes,
And prieth his blynde hors over the falwes,
And suffreth his wyf to go seken halwes,
Is worthy to been hanged on the galwes.
But al for noght, I sette noght an hawe
Of his proverbes nor his olde sawe;
Ne I wolde nat of hym corrected be.
I hate hym that my vices telleth me,
And so doo mo, God woot! of us than I.
This made hym with me wood al outrelly;
I nolde noght forbere hym in no cas.
Now wol I seye yow sooth, by Seint Thomas,
Why that I rente out of his book a leef,
for which he smoot me so that I was deef.
He hadde a book that gladly, nyght and day,
for his desport he wolde rede alway.
He cleped it Valerie and Theofraste,
At whiche book he lough alwey ful faste;
And eek ther was som tyme a clerk at Rome,
A cardinal, that highte Seint Jerome,
That made a book agayn Jovinian,
In whiche book eek ther was Tertulan,
Crisippus, Trotula, and Helowys,
That was abbess nat fer fro Parys;
And eek the Parables of Salomon,
Ovides Art, and bookes many on;
And alle thise were bounden in o volume.
And every nyght and day was his custume,
Whan he hadde leyser and vacacioun
from oother worldly occupacioun,
To reden on this book of wikked wyves.
He knew of hem mo legendes and lyves
Than been of goode wyves in the Bible,
for, trusteth wel, it is an impossible
That any clerk wol speke good of wyves,
But if it be of hooly Seintes lyves,
Ne of noon oother womman never the mo.
Who peyntede the leoun? Tel me who.
By God! if wommen hadde writen stories,
As clerkes han withinne hire oratories,
They wolde han writen of men moore wikkednesse
Than all the mark of Adam may redresse.

The children of Mercurie and of Venus
Been in hir wirkyng ful contrarius;
Mercurie loveth wysdom and science,
And Venus loveth ryot and dispence;
And, for hire diverse disposicioun,
Ech falleth in ootheres exaltacioun;
And thus, God woot, Mercurie is desolat
In Pisces, wher Venus is exaltat;
And Venus falleth ther Mercurie is reysed;
Therefore no womman of no clerk is preyssed,
The clerk, whan he is oold, and may noght do
Of Venus werkis worth his olde sho,
Thanne sit he doun, and writ in his dotage
That wommen kan nat kepe hir mariage.
Now to purpos, why I tolde thee
That I was beten for a book, pardce.
Upon a nyght, Jankyn that was oure sire
Redde on his book, as he sat by the fire,
Of Eva first, that, for hir wikkednesse
Was al mankynde broght to wrecchednesse;
for which that Jhesu Crist hymself was slayn,
That boghte us with his herte/blood agayn.
Lo, heere expres of womman may ye fynde,
That womman was the los of al mankynde.
Cho redde he me how Sampson loste his heres;
Slepyng, his lemman kytte hem with hir sheres;
Thurgh whiche tresoun loste he bothe his eyen.
Cho redde he me, if that I shal nat lyen,
Of Hercules and of his Dianyre,
That caused hym to sette hymself afyre.
Nothyng forgat he the sorwe and wo
That Socrates hadde with his wyves two;
How Xantippa caste pisse upon his heed.
This sely man sat stille as he were deed;
He wiped his heed, namore dorste he seyn
But, Er that thonder stynte, comth a reyn!
Of Phasipha, that was the queene of Crete,
for shrewednesse, hym thoughte the tale swete;
fy! speke namoore; it is a grisly thyng,
Of hire horrible lust and hir likyng!
Of Clitemystra, for hire lecherye
That falsly made hire housbonde for to dye;
He redde it with ful good devocioun.
He tolde me eek for what occasioun
Amphiorax at Thebes loste his lyf;
Myn housbonde hadde a legende of his wyf,
Of Eriphilem, that for an ouche of gold
hath prively unto the Grekes told
Wher that hir housbonde hidde hym in a place,
for which he hadde at Thebes sory grace.
Of Lyma tolde he me, and of Lucye;
They bothe made hir housbondes for to dye;
That oon for love, that oother was for hate;
Lyma, hir housbonde, on an even late,
Empoysoned hath, for that she was his fo;
Lucia, likerous, loved hire housbonde so,
That, for he sholde alwey upon hire thynke,
She yaf hym swich a manere love/drynke
That he was deed, er it were by the morwe;
And thus algates housbondes han sorwe.
Thanne tolde he me, how oon Latumyus
Compleyned unto his felawe Arrius
That in his gardyn growed swich a tree,

On which, he seyde, how that his wyves thre
hanged herself for herte despitus.
O leve brother, quod this Arrius,
Yif me a plante of thilke blissed tree,
And in my gardyn planted it shal be.
Of latter date, of wyves hath he red,
That somme han slayn hir housbondes in hir bed,
And lete hir leechour dighte hire al the nyght,
Whan that the corps lay in the floor upright;
And somme han dryve nayles in hir brayn
Whil that they slepte, and thus they han hem
slayn.
Somme han hem yewe poyssoun in hire drynke;
he spak moore harm than herte may bithynke;
And therewithal, he knew of mo proverbes,
Than in this world ther growen gras or herbes.
Bet is, quod he, thyn habitacioun
Be with a leoun or a foul dragoun,
Than with a womman usynge for to chydre.
Bet is, quod he, hys in the roof abyde,
Than with an angry wyf doun in the hous.
They been so wikked and contrarious,
They haten that hir housbondes loven ay.
he seyde: A womman cast hir shame away
Whan she cast of hir smok; and forther mo,
A fair womman, but she be chaast also,
Is lyk a gold ryng in a sowes nose.
Who wolde wenen, or who wolde suppose,
The wo that in myn herte was, and pyne?
ND whan I saugh he wolde nevere fyne
To reden on this cursed book al nyght,
Al soodeynly thre leves have I plyght
Out of his book, right as he radde, and eke
I with my fest so took hym on the cheke,
That in oure fyr he fil bakward adoun;
And he up sturte as dooth a wood leoun,
And with his fest he smoot me on the heed,
That in the floor I lay as I were deed;
And whan he saugh how stille that I lay,
he was agast, and wolde han fled his way,
Til atte laste out of my swogh I breyde:
O! hastow slayn me, false theef? I seyde:
And for my land thus hastow mordred me?
Er I be deed, yet wol I kisse thee.
And neer he cam, and kneled faire adoun,
And seyde: Deere suster Alisoun!
As help me God, I shal thee nevere smyte;
That I have doon, it is thyself to wyte.
foryeve it me, and that I thee biseke;
And yet, eftsoones, I hitte hym on the cheke,
And seyde: Theef! thus muchel am I wreke;
Now wol I dye, I may no lenger speke.
But atte laste, with muchel care and wo,

We fille accorded, by us selven two.
He yaf me al the bridel in myn hond,
To han the governance of hous and lond,
And of his tonge, and of his hond also,
And made hym brenne his book anon right tho;
And whan that I hadde geten unto me,
By maistrie, al the soveraynetee,
And that he seyde: Myn owene trewe wyf,
Do as thee lust to terme of al thy lyf,
Keep thyn honour, and keep eek myn estaat.
After that day we hadden never debaat.
God help me so, I was to hym as kynde
As any wyf from Denmark unto Ynde,
And also trewe, and so was he to me.
I prey to God, that sit in magestee,
So blesse his soule, for his mercy deere.
Now wol I seye my tale, if ye wol heere.

Biholde the wordes bitwene the Somnour and
the Frere.

SE frere lough, whan he hadde herd
al this;
Now, dame, quod he, so have I joye
or blis,
This is a long preamble of a tale!
And whan the Somnour herde
the frere gale,
Lo! quod the Somnour, Goddes armes two!
A frere wol entremette him evermo.
Lo, goode men, a flye, and eek a frere,
Wol falle in every dyssh and eek mateere.
What spekestow of preambulacioun?
What! amble, or trotte, or pees, or go sit doun;
Thou lettest oure disport in this manere.
Ye, woltow so, sire Somnour? quod the frere;
Now, by my feith! I shal, er that I go,
Telle of a somnour swich a tale or two
That alle the folk shal laughen in this place.
Now elles, frere, I bishrewe thy face!
Quod this Somnour, and I bishrewe me
But if I telle tales, two or thre,
Of freres, er I come to Sidyngborne,
That I shal make thyn herte for to morne,
for wel I woot thy pacience is gon.
URE hooste cride, Pees! and that anon!
And seyde: Lat the womman telle hire
tale;
Ye fare as folk that dronken been of ale.
Do, dame, telle forth youre tale, and that is best.
Al redy, sire, quod she, right as yow lest;
If I have licence of this worthy frere.
Yis, dame, quod he, tel forth, and I wol heere.
Heere endeth the Wyf of Bath hir prologe.

The Tale
of the
Wife of
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HERE BIGYNNETH THE TALE OF THE WIFE OF BATH



Like a knight, he may nat do alas hym liketh;
 And at the laste, he chees hym for to wende,
 And come agayn, right at the yeres ende,
 With swich answer as God wolde hym purveye;
 And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth his weye.

For now the grete charitee and prayeres
 Of lymytours, and othere hooly freres,
 That serchen every lond and every streem,
 As thikke as motes in the sonne-beem,
 Blessyng halles, chambres, kichen, bours,
 Citees, burghes, castels, hys toures,
 Chropes, bernis, shipnes, dayeryes,
 This maketh that ther been no faieryes;
 For ther as wont to walken was an elf,
 Ther walketh now the lymytour hymself,
 In undermeles and in morwenynges,
 And seyth his matyns and his hooly thynges
 As he gooth in his lymytacioun.
 Wommen may go sauflly up and down;
 In every bussch, or under every tree,
 Ther is noon oother incubus but he,
 And he ne wol doon hem but dishonour.

THOLDE dayes of the Kyng Arthour,
 Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
 It was this land fulfild of faierye.
 The elf queene with hir joly compaignye
 Daunced ful ofte in manye a grene mede;
 This was the olde opinion, as I rede.
 I speke of manye hundred yeres ago;
 But now kan no man se none elves mo.

By cours of lawe, and sholde han lost his heed
 Paraventure, swich was the statut tho;
 But that the queene and othere ladyes mo
 So longe preyeden the kyng of grace,
 Til he his lyf hym graunted in the place,
 And yaf hym to the queene al at hir wille,
 To chese, whether she wolde hym save or spille.
 The queene thanketh the kyng with al hir myght,
 And after this thus spak she to the knyght,
 Whan that she saugh hir tyme, upon a day:
 Thou standest yet, quod she, in swich array,
 That of thy lyf yet hastow no suretee.
 I grante thee lyf, if thou kanst tellen me
 What thyng is it that wommen moost desiren;
 Be war, and keep thy nekke boon from iren.
 And if thou kanst nat tellen it anon,
 Yet shal I yve thee leve for to gon
 A twelfmonth and a day, to seche and leere
 An answer suffisant in this mateere;
 And suretee wol I han, er that thou pace,
 Thy body for to yelden in this place.

WAS this knyght, and sorwefully he
 Sikketh;
 But what! he may nat do alas hym liketh;
 And at the laste, he chees hym for to wende,
 And come agayn, right at the yeres ende,
 With swich answer as God wolde hym purveye;
 And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth his weye.

SEKETH every hous and every place
 Wheras he hopeth for to fynde grace
 To lerne, what thyng wommen loven moost;
 But he ne koude arryven in no coost
 Wheras he myghte fynde in this mateere
 Two creatures accordyng in feere.

SOMME seyde, wommen loven best
 richesse,
 Somme seyde, honour, somme seyde,
 jolynece,
 Somme, riche array, somme seyden, lust abedde,
 And ofte tyme to be wydwe and wedde.

Somme seyde, that oure hertes been moost esed
 Whan that we been yflatered and yplesed.

GOOTH ful ny the sothe, I wol nat lye,
 A man shal wyne us best with flaterye;
 And with attendance, and with bisynesse,
 Been we ylymed, bothe moore and lesse.

Somme seyn, how that we loven best
 for to be free, and do right as us lest,
 And that no man repreve us of oure vice,
 But seye that we be wise, and nothyng nyce;

for trewely ther is noon of us alle,
 If any wight wol clawe us on the galle,
 That we nil hike, for he seith us sooth.
 Assay, and he shal fynde it, that so dooth,
 for, be we never so vicious withinne,
 We wol been holden wise, and clene of synne.

Somme seyn, that greet delit han we
 for to been holden stable and eek secree,
 And in o purpos stedefastly to dwelle,
 And nat biwrewe thyng that men us telle;
 But that tale is nat worth a rake/stele.
 Pardee, we wommen konne nothyng hele;
 Witnesse on Myda; wol ye heere the tale?

OYDE, amonges othere thynges
 smale,
 Seyde, Myda hadde, under his longe
 heres,
 Growyng upon his heed, two asses
 cres,

The whiche vice he hydde, as he best myghte,
 ful subtilly from every mannes sighte,
 That, save his wyf, ther wist of it namo.
 He loved hire moost, and trusted hire also;
 He preyede hire, that to no creature
 She sholde tellen of his disfigure.
 She swoor him Nay, for al this world to wyne,
 She nolde do that vileynye or synne,
 To make hir housbonde han so foul a name;
 She nolde nat telle it for hir owene shame.
 But natheles, hir thoughte that she dyde,
 That she so longe sholde a conseil hyde;
 Hir thoughte it swal so soore aboute hir herte,
 That nedely som word hire mooste aterne;
 And sith she dorste telle it to no man,
 Down to a mareys faste by she ran;
 Til she came there, her herte was afyre,
 And as a bitore bombleth in the myre,
 She leyde hir mouth unto the water down;
 Biwrewe me nat, thou water, with thy soun,
 Quod she, to thee I telle it, and namo,
 Myn housbonde hath longe asses crys two.
 Now is myn herte all hool, now is it oute;
 I myghte no longer kepe it, out of doute.

ERE may ye se, though we a tyme abyde,
 Yet, out it moot, we can no conseil hyde.
 The remenant of the tale if ye wol heere,
 Redeth Ovyde, and ther ye may it leere.

THIS knyght, of which my tale is specially,
 Whan that he saugh he myghte nat come
 therby,

That is to seye, what wommen loven moost,
 Withinne his brest ful sorweful was the goost.
 But hoom he gooth, he myghte nat sojourne,
 The day was come that homward moste he tourne.
 And in his wey it happed hym to ryde,
 In al this care, under a forest/syde,
 Wheras he saugh upon a daunce go
 Of ladyes foure and twenty, and yet mo;
 Toward the whiche daunce he drow ful yerne,
 In hope that som wysdom sholde he lerne;
 But certeinly, er he came fully there,
 Vanysshed was this daunce, he nyste where.
 No creature saugh he that bar lyf,
 Save on the grene he saugh sittynge a wyf;
 A fouler wight ther may no man devyse.
 Agayn the knyght this olde wyf gan ryse,
 And seyde: Sire knyght, heerforth ne lith no wey;
 Tel me, what that ye seken, by youre fey.
 Paraventure it may the bettre be;
 This olde folk kan muchel thyng, quod she.
 My leeve mooder, quod this knyght, certeyn
 I nam but deed, but if that I kan seyn
 What thyng it is that wommen moost desire:
 Koude ye me wisse, I wolde wel quite youre hire.
 Plight me thy trouthe heere in myn hand,
 quod she,

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 of the
 Wife of
 Bath



The nexte thyng that I requere thee,
Thou shalt it do, if it lye in thy myght;
And I wol telle it yow, er it be nyght.

HAVE heer my trouthe, quod the knyght,
I grante.

THanne, quod she, I dar me wel avante
Thy lyf is sauf, for I wol stonde therby,
Upon my lyf, the queene wol seye as I.
Lat se which is the proudeste of hem alle
That wereth on a coverchief or a calle,
That dar seye Nay, of that I shal thee teche.
Lat us go forth withouten lenger speche.

THO rownded she a pistel in his ere,
And bad hym to be glad and have no fere.
WHAN they be comen to the court,
this knyght
seyde, he had holde his day, as he
hadde hight,
And redy was his answer, as he sayde.
ful many a noble wyf, and many a mayde,
And many a wydwe, for that they been wise,
The queene herself sittynge as a justise,
Assembled been, his answer for to heere;
And afterward this knyght was bode appeere.

Every wight comanded was silence,
And that the knyght sholde telle in
audience,
What thyng that worldly women loven best.

This knyght ne stood nat stille as doth a
best,
But to his questioun anon answerde
With manly voys, that al the court it herde:

MY lige lady, generally, quod he,
Women desiren have sovereyneter
As wel over hir housbond as hir love,
And for to been in maistrie hym above;
This is youre moost desir, thogh ye me kille,
Dooth as yow list, I am heer at youre wille.

Nal the court ne was ther wyf, ne mayde,
Ne wydwe, that contrariad that he
sayde,

But seyden, He was worthy han his lyf;
And with that word up sturte the olde wyf,
Which that the knyght saugh sittynge in the
grene:

Mercy! quod she, my sovereyn lady queene!
Er that youre court departe, do me right;
I taughte this answer unto the knyght;
for which he plichte me his trouthe there,
The firste thyng I wolde of hym requere,
He wolde it do, if it lay in his myght.

Bifore the court thanne preye I thee, sir
knyght,

Quod she, that thou me take unto thy wyf;
for wel thou woost that I have kept thy lyf.
If I sey fals, sey Nay, upon thy fey!



THIS knyght answerde, Alas, and
weylawey!
I woot right wel that swich was my
biheste.

for Goddes love, as chees a newe requeste!
Taak al my good, and lat my body go.

Nay thanne, quod she, I shrewe us bothe
two!

for thogh that I be foul, and oold, and poore,
I nolde for al the metal, ne for oore
That under erthe is grave, or lith above,
But if thy wyf I were, and eek thy love!

My love? quod he, nay, my dampna-
cioun!

Alas! that any of my nacioun
Sholde evere so foule disparaged be!

But al for noght, the ende is this, that he
Constreyned was, he nedes mooste hire wedde;
And taketh his olde wyf, and gooth to bedde.

Now wolden som men seye, paraventure,
That, for my negligence, I do no cure

To tellen yow the joye and al tharray,
That at the feeste was that ilke day.

To which thyng shortly answeren I shal;
I seye, ther nas no joye ne feeste at al,

Ther nas but hevynesse, and muche sorwe,
for prively he wedded hire on morwe,

And al day after hidde hym as an owle;

So wo was hym, his wyf looked so foule.

REET was the wo the knyght hadde
in his thocht,
Whan he was with his wyf abedde
ybroght.

He walweth, and he turneth to and fro;
His olde wyf lay smyllynge everemo,

And seyde, O deere housbonde, benedicitee!
fareth every knyght thus with his wyf as ye?

Is this the lawe of kyng Arthures hous?
Is every knyght of his so dangerous?

I am youre owene love, and eek youre wyf;
I am she which that saved hath youre lyf,

And certes, yet dide I yow nevere unright.
Why fare ye thus with me this firste nyght?

Ye faren lyk a man had lost his wit;
What is my gilt? for Goddes love tel it,

And it shal been amended, if I may.
Amended! quod this knyght, alas! nay,

nay!

It wol nat been amended nevere mo,
Thou art so loothly, and so oold also,

And therto comen of so lough a kynde,
That litel wonder is, thogh I walwe and wynde.

So wolde God, myn herte wolde breste!
Is this, quod she, the cause of youre

unreste?
Ye, certainly, quod he, no wonder is.

**The Tale
of the
Wife of
Bath**

Now, sire, quod she, I koude amende al this,
If that me liste, er it were dayes thre;
So wel ye myghte bere yow unto me.
But for ye speken of swich gentillesse
As is descended out of old richesse,
That therfore sholden ye be gentil men,
Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.
Looke who that is moost vertuous alway,
Pryvee and apert, and moost entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedes that he kan,
And taak hym for the grettest gentil man.
Crist wole, we clayme of hym oure gentillesse,
Nat of oure eldres for hire old richesse.
for thogh they yeve us al hir heritage,
for which we clayme to been of heigh parage,
Yet may they nat biquethe, for nothyng,
To noon of us, hir vertuous lyyving,
That made hem gentil men ycalled be,
And bade us folwen hem in swich degree.

Wel kan the wise poete of florence,
That highte Dant, speken in this sentence;
Lo in swich maner rym is Dantes tale:
ful selde up riseth by his branches smale
Prowesse of man, for God, of his goodnesse,
Wole that of hym we clayme our gentillesse;
for of oure eldres may we nothyng clayme,
But temporel thyng, that man may hurte and
mayme.

Eek every wight woot this as wel as I,
If gentillesse were planted naturelly
Unto a certeyn lynage, doun the lyne,
Pryvee ne apert, than wolde they nevere fyne
To doon of gentillesse the faire office;
They myghte do no vileynye or vice.
Taak fyr, and ber it in the derkeste hous
Bitwix this and the mount of Kaukasous,
And lat men shette the dores and go thenne;
Yet wole the fyr as faire lye and brenne,
As twenty thousand men myghte it biholde;
His office naturel ay wol it holde,
Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye.
EERE may ye se wel, how that genterye
Is nat annexed to possessioun,
Sith folk ne doon hir operacioun
Alwey, as dooth the fyr, lo! in his kynde.
for, God it woot, men may wel often fynde
A lordes sone do shame and vileynye;
And he that wole han pris of his gentrye
for he was boren of a gentil hous,
And hadde his eldres noble and vertuous,
And nyl hymselfen do no gentil dedis,
Ne folwe his gentil auncestre that deed is,
He nys nat gentil, be he duc or erl;
for vileyns synful dedes make a cherl.
for gentillesse nys but renomee
Of thynne auncestres, for hire heigh bountee,
Which is a strange thyng to thy persone.
Thy gentillesse cometh fro God allone;
It was nothyng biquethe us with oure place.
Chenkeith how noble, as seith Valerius,
Was thilke Tullius Hostilius,
That out of poverté roos to heigh noblesse.

Redeth Senek, and redeth eek Boece,
Ther shul ye seen expres, that it no drede is,
That he is gentil that dooth gentil dedis;
And therfore, leve housbonde, I thus conclude,
At were it that myne auncestres were rude,
Yet may the hye God, and so hope I,
Grante me grace to lyven vertuously;
Thanne am I gentil, whan that I bigynne
To lyven vertuously and weyve synne.

And theas ye of poverté me repreve,
The hye God, on whom that we bileve,
In wilful poverté chees to lyve his lyf,
And certes, every man, mayden, or wyf,
May understonde that Jhesus, hevене
kyng,
Ne wolde nat chesen vicious lyyving.

Glad poverté is an honeste thyng, certeyn;
This wole Senek and othere clerkes seyn.
Whoso that halt hym payd of his poverté,
I holde hym riche, al hadde he nat a sherte.
He that covetith is a povere wight,
for he wolde han that is nat in his myght.
But he that noght hath, ne covetith have,
Is riche, although ye holde hym but a knave.
Verray poverté, it syngeth proprely;
Juvenal seith of poverté myrily:
The povre man, whan he goth by the weye,
Bifore the theves he may synge and pleye.
Poverté is hateful good, and, as I gesse,
A ful greet bryngere out of bisynesse;
A greet amender eek of sapience
To hym that taketh it in pacience.
Poverté is this, although it seme alenge:
Possessioun, that no wight wol chalenge,
Poverté ful ofte, whan a man is lowe,
Maketh his God, and eek hymself, to knowe.
Poverté a spectacle is, as thynketh me,
Thurgh which he may his verray freendes see.
And therfore, sire, syn that I noght yow greve,
Of my poverté namoore ye me repreve.

Ow, sire, of elde ye repreve me;
And certes, sire, thogh noon auctoritee
Were in no book, ye gentils of honour
Seyn that men sholde an oold wight doon
favour,
And clepe hym fader, for youre gentillesse;
And auctours shal I fynden, as I gesse.
Now ther ye seye that I am foul and old,
Than drede yow noght to been a cokewold;
for filthe and elde, also moot I thee,
Been grete wardyens upon chastitee;
But natheles, syn I knowe youre delit,
I shal fulfille youre worldly appetit.
Chese now, quod she, oon of thise thynges
tweye:
To han me foul and old til that I dye,
And be to yow a trewe humble wyf,
And nevere yow displese in al my lyf;
Or elles ye wol han me yong and fair,
And take youre aventure of the repair
That shal be to youre hous, bycause of me,
Or in som oother place, may wel be;
Now chese yourselven, whether that yow liketh.

THIS knyght avyseth hym and sore
siketh,
But atte laste he seyde in this manere:
My lady and my love, and wyf so deere,
I put me in youre wise governance;
Cheseeth youreself which may be moost
plesance,
And moost honour to yow and me also;
I do no fors the wheither of the two;
For as yow liketh it suffiseth me.

HANNE have I gete of yow maistrie,
quod she,
Syn I may chese, and governe as me
lest?

Ye, certes, wyf, quod he, I holde it best.
Kys me, quod she, we be no lenger wrothe;
for, by my trouthe, I wol be to yow bothe,
This is to seyn, ye, bothe fair and good.
I prey to God that I moote sterven wood,
But I to yow be al so good and trewe,
As evere was wyf, syn that the world was
newe.

And, but I be tomoren as fair to seene
As any lady, emperice, or queene,
That is bitwixe the est and eek the west,
Dooth with my lyf & deth right as yow lest.
Cast up the curtyn, looke how that it is.
And whan the knyght saugh verrailly al this,
That she so fair was, and so yong therto,
for joye he hente hire in his armes two,
his herte bathed in a bath of blisse;
A thousand tyme arewe he gan hire kisse.
And she obeyed hym in every thyng
That myghte doon hym plesance or likyng.

And thus they lyve unto hir lyves ende,
In parfit joye; and Jhesu Crist us sende
Housbondes meeke, yonge, and fresssh
abedde,
And grace toverbyde hem that we wedde.
And eek, I praye Jhesu, shorte hir lyves
That wol nat be governed by hir wyves;
And olde and angry nygards of dispence,
God sende hem soone verray pestilence!
Here endeth the Wyves Tale of Bath.

HERE BIGYNNETH THE FRERES TALE

WHILOM ther was dwell-
ynge in my contree
An erchedekene, a man
of heigh degree,
That boldly dide exe-
cucion
In punysshynge of
fornicioun,
Of wichecraft, and
eek of bawderye,
Of diffamacioun, and avowtrye,
Of chirche-reves, and of testaments,
Of contractes, and of lakke of sacraments,
And eek of many another maner cryme,
Which nedeth nat rehercen for this tyme;

The prologe of the freres Tale

THIS worthy lymytour,
this noble frere,
He made alway a maner
louryng chiere
Upon the Somnour,
but for honestee
No vileyns word as yet
to hym spak he.
But atte laste he seyde
unto the Wyf,
Dame, quod he, God yeve yow right good tyf!
Ye han heer touched, also moot I thee,
In scole-matere greet difficultee.
Ye han seyd muchel thyng right wel, I seye;
But dame, heere as we ryden by the weye,
As nedeth nat to speken but of game,
And lete auctoritees, on Goddes name,
To prechynge, and to scole eek of clergie.
And if it lyke to this compaignye,
I wol yow of a Somnour telle a game.
Pardee, ye may wel knowe by the name,
That of a Somnour may no good be sayd;
I praye that noon of you be yvele apayd.
A Somnour is a renner up and doun
With mandemens for fornicacioun,
And is ybet at every townes ende.

ARE hoost tho spak, A, sire, ye
sholde be hende
And curteys, as a man of youre
estaat;
In compaignye we wol have no debaat;
Telleth youre tale, and lat the Somnour be.
Nay, quod the Somnour, lat hym seye to me
Whatsow hym list; whan it comth to my lot,
By God! I shal hym quiten every grot!
I shal hym tellen which a greet honour
It is to be a flaterynge lymytour;
And his office I shal hym telle, ywis.
Oure hoost answerde, Dees! namoore of
this!
And after this he seyde unto the frere,
Tel forth youre tale, leve maister deere.
Here endeth the prologe of the frere.

Of usure, and of symonye also.
But certes, leechours dide he grettest wo;
They sholde synge, if that they were hent;
And smale tytheres weren foule yshent;
If any persone wolde upon hem pleyne
Ther myghte asterte hym no pecunyal peyne.
for smale tithes, and for smal offrynge,
He made the peple pitously to synge;
forer the bisshope caughte hem with his hook,
They weren in the erchedeknes book.
Thanne hadde he, thurgh his jurisdictioun,
Power to doon on hem correccioun.
He hadde a Somnour redy to his hond,
A slyer boye was noon in Engeland;
for subtilly he hadde his espaille,

That taughte hym, wher that hym myghte availle.
He koude spare of lechours oon or two,
To techen hym to foure and twenty mo.
for thogh this Somnour wood were as an hare,
To telle his harlotrye I wol nat spare;
for we been out of his correccioun;
They han of us no iurisdiccoun,
Ne nevere shullen, terme of alle hir lyves.
Peter! go been the wommen of the styves,
Quod the Somnour, yput out of my cure!
Pees! with myschance and with mysaventure!
Thus seyde our hoost, and lat hym telle his tale.
Now telleth forth, thogh that the Somnour gale,
Ne spareth nat, myn owene maister deere.

THIS false thief, this Somnour, quod the
frere,
Hadde alwey bawdes redy to his hond,
As any hawk to lure in Engeland,
That tolde hym al the secree that they knewe;
for hire acqeyntance was nat come of newe.
They weren his approwours prively;
He took hymself a greet profit therby;
his maister knew nat alwey what he wan.
Withouten mandement, a lewed man
he koude somme, on peyne of Cristes curs,
And they were glade for to fille his purs,
And make hym grete feestes atte nale;
And right as Judas hadde purses smale,
And was a thief, right swich a thief was he;
his maister hadde but half his duece.
He was, if I shal yeven hym his laude,
A thief, and eek a Somnour, and a baude.
He hadde eek wenches at his retenue,
That whether that sir Robert, or sir Huwe,
Or Jakke, or Rauf, or whoso that it were,
That lay by hem, they tolde it in his ere;
Thus was the wenche and he of oon assent.
And he wolde fecche a feyned mandement,
And somme hem to the chapitre bothe two,
And pile the man, and lete the wenche go.
Thanne wolde heseye, freend, I shal for thysake
Do striken hire out of oure lettres blake;
Thee thar namoore as in this cas travaille;
I am thy freend, ther I thee may availle.
Certeyn he knew of briberyes mo
Than possible is to telle in yeres two;
for in this world nys dogge for the bowe,
That kan an hurt deer from an hool yknowe,
Bet than this Somnour knew a sly lechour,
Or an avoutier, or a paramour;
And, for that was the fruyt of al his rente,
Therefore on it he sette al his entente.

AND so bifel, that ones on a day
This Somnour, evere waityng on his pray,
Rode for to somme a widwe, an old ribbe,
feynyng a cause, for he wolde brybe.
And happed that he saugh bifore hym ryde
A gay yeman, under a forest syde.
A bowe he bar, and arwes brighte and kene;
He hadde upon a courtepy of grene;
An hat upon his heed with frenches blake.
Sire, quod this Somnour, hay! and wel atake!
Welcome! quod he, and every good felawe!

Wher rydestow under this grene, wode shawe?
Seyde this yeman, wiltow fer to day?
This Somnour hym answerde, and seyde, Nay,
heere faste by, quod he, is myn entente
To ryden, for to reysen up a rente
That longeth to my lordes duece.
Hrtow thanne a bailly? Ye, quod he.
He dorste nat, for verray filthe and shame,
Seyde that he was a Somnour, for the name.

EPARDIEUX! quod this yeman, deere
brother,
Thou art a bailly, and I am another.
I am unknowen as in this contree;
Of thyn acqeyntance I wolde praye thee,
And eek of bretherhede, if that yow leste.
I have gold and silver in my cheste;
If that thee happe to comen in oure shire,
Al shal be thyn, right as thou wolt desire.
Grantmercy! quod this Somnour, by my feith!
Everych in ootheres hand his trouthe leith,
for to be sworne bretheren til they deye.
In daliance they ryden forth hir weye.

THIS Somnour, which that was as ful of jangles,
As ful of venym been thise waryngles,
And evere enqueriing upon every thyng;
Brother, quod he, where is now youre dwellyng,
Another day if that I sholde yow seche?
for we, quod he, wol us swiche formes make
As moost able is oure preyes for to take.
Hs moost able is oure preyes for to take.
What maketh yow to han al this labour?
ful many a cause, leewe sire Somnour,
Seyde this feend, but alle thyng hath tyme;
The day is short, and it is passed pryme,
And yet ne wan I nothyng in this day;

Now, brother, quod this Somnour, I yow
preye,
Teche me, whil that we ryden by the weye,
Syn that ye been a baillif as am I,
Som subtiltee, and tel me feithfully
In myn office how that I may moost wyne,
And spareth nat for conscience ne synne,
But as my brother tel me, how do ye.

Now, by my trouthe, brother deere, seyde he,
As I shal tellen thee a feithful tale,
My wages been ful streite and eek ful smale;
My lord is hard to me and daungerous,
And myn office is ful laborious;
And therefore by extorcions I lyve.
forsothe, I take al that men wol me yeve,
Algate, by sleighte or by violence,
fro yer to yer I wyne al my dispence;
I kan no better telle feithfully.

Now certes, quod this Somnour, so fare I;
I spare nat to taken, God it woot,
But if it be to hevy or to boot.
What I may gete in conseil prively;
No maner conscience of that have I;
Nere myn extorcoun, I myghte nat lyven,
Nor of swiche japes wol I nat be shryven.
Stomak, ne conscience, ne knowe I noon;
I shrewe thise shrifte, fadres everychoon.
Wel be we met, by God and by Seint Jame!
But, leewe brother, tel me thanne thy name,
Quod this Somnour; and in this meenewhile
This yeman gan a litel for to smyle.

BROTHER, quod he, wiltow that I thee telle?
I am a feend; my dwellyng is in helle,
And heere I ryde aboute my purchasyng,
To wite wher men wolde yeve me anythyng.
My purchas is theeffect of al my rente.
Looke how thou rydest for the same entente,
To wyne good, thou rekkest nevere how;
Right so fare I, for ryde I wolde right now
Unto the worldes ende for a preye.

QUOD this Somnour, benedicite! what
sey ye?
I wende ye were a yeman trewely.
Ye han a mannes shap as wel as I;
han ye a figure thanne determinat
In helle, ther ye been in youre estat?
Nay, certeinly, quod he, ther have we noon;
But whan us liketh, we kan take us oon,
Or elles make yow seme we been shape
Somtym lyk a man, or lyk an ape;
Or lyk an angel kan I ryde or go.
It is no wonder thyng thogh it be so;
Hlowy jogelour kan deceyve thee,
And pardee! yet kan I moore craft than he.
Whi, quod the Somnour, ryde ye thanne or
goon

In sondry shap, and nat alwey in oon?
for we, quod he, wol us swiche formes make
As moost able is oure preyes for to take.
What maketh yow to han al this labour?
ful many a cause, leewe sire Somnour,
Seyde this feend, but alle thyng hath tyme;
The day is short, and it is passed pryme,
And yet ne wan I nothyng in this day;
I wol entente to wyne, if I may,
And nat entente our wittes to declare.
for, brother myn, thy wit is al to bare
To understonde, althogh I tolde hem thee.
But, for thou axest why labouren we;
for somtyme we been Goddes instruments
And meenes to doon his comandements,
Whan that hym list, upon his creatures,
In divers art and in diverse figures.
Withouten hym we have no myght, certayn,
If that hym list to stonden ther agayn.
And somtyme, at oure prayer, han we leve
Oonly the body and nat the soule greve;
Witness on Job, whom that we diden wo;
And somtyme, han we myght of bothe two,
This is to seyn, of soule and body eke.
And somtyme be we suffred for to seke
Upon a man, and doon his soule unreste,
And nat his body, and al is for the beste.
Whan he withstandeth oure temptacioun,
It is the cause of his savacioun;
Albeit that it was nat oure entente
he sholde be sauf, but that we wolde hym hente.
And somtyme be we servant unto man,
As to the erchebisshope Seint Dunstan;
And to the Apostles, servant eek was I.

ET tel me, quod the Somnour, feithfully,
Make ye yow newe bodies thus alway
Of elements? The feend answerde, Nay;
Somtyme we feyne, and somtyme we aryse

With dede bodies in ful sondry wyse,
And speke as renably and faire and wel
As to the Phitonissa dide Samuel;
And yet wol som men seye it was nat he.
I do no fors of youre dyvynytee,
But o thyng warne I thee, I wol nat jape,
Thou wolt algates wite how we been shape;
Thou shalt herafterwardes, my brother deere,
Come there thee nedeth nat of me to leere.
for thou shalt by thyn owene experience
Konne in a chayer rede of this sentence
Bet than Virgile, while he was on lyve,
Or Dant also; now lat us ryde blyve,
for I wole holde compaignye with thee
Til it be so, that thou forsake me.

NAY, quod this Somnour, that shal nat
bityde;
I am a yeman, knowen is ful wyde;
My trouthe wol I holde as in this cas.
for though thou were the devel Sathanas,
My trouthe wol I holde to my brother,
As I am sworn, and ech of us til oother
for to be trewe brother in this cas;
And bothe we goon abouten oure purchas.
Taak thou thy part, what that men wol thee yive,
And I shal myn; thus may we bothe lyve,
And if that any of us have moore than oother,
Lat hym be trewe, and parte it with his brother.

GRACUNTE, quod the devel, by my fey!
And with that word they ryden forth hir wey.
And right at the entryng of the townes ende,
To which this Somnour shoop hym for to
wende,
They saugh a cart, that charged was with hey,
Which that a carter droof forth in his wey.
Deep was the wey, for which the carte stood;
The carter smoot, and cryde, as he were wood,
Hayt, Brok! hayt, Scot! what spare ye for the
stones?

The feend, quod he, yow fecche body and bones,
As ferforthly as evere were ye fole!
So muche wo as I have with yow tholed!
The devel have al, bothe hors and cart and hey!
This Somnour seyde, heere shal we have
a pley;

And neer the feend he drough, as noght ne
were,
ful prively, and rowned in his ere:
herkne, my brother! herkne, by thy feith!
herestow nat how that the carter seith?
hent it anon, for he hath yeve it thee,
Bothe hey and cart, and eek his caples thre.
Nay, quod the devel, God woot, never a deel;
It is nat his entente, trust me weel.
Axe hym thyself, if thou nat trowest me,
Or elles stynt awhile, and thou shalt see.
This carter thakketh his hors upon the croupe,
And they bigonne drawn and tostoupe.
Heyt, now! quod he, ther Jhesu Crist yow
blesse!
And al his handwerk, bothe moore and lesse!
That was wel twight, myn owene lyard boy!
I pray God save thee! and Seint Loy!

Now is my cart out of the slow, pardee!
Lo! brother, quod the feend, what tolde I thee?
Heere may ye se, myn owene deere brother,
The carl spak o thyng, but he thoughte another.
Lat us go forth abouten oure viage;
Heere wyne I nothyng upon cariage.

AN that they coomen somewhat
out of towne,
This Somnour to his brother gan
to rowne:
Brother, quod he, heere woneth an
old rebeke,

That hadde almoost as lief to lese hire nekke
As for to yeve a peny of hir good.
I wolde han twelf pens, though that she be wood,
Or I wol sompne hire unto oure office,
And yet, God woot, of hire knowe I no vice.
But, for thou kanst nat, as in this contree,
Wyne thy cost, taak heer ensample of me.

This Somnour clappeth at the wydwes gate:
Come out, quod he, thou olde virytrate!
I trowe thou hast som frere or preest with thee.

Who clappeth? seyde this wyf, benedicitee!
God save you, sire! what is youre sweete wille?

I have, quod he, of somonce here a bille;
Up peyne of cursyng, looke that thou be
Tomorn biforn the erchedeknes knee,
Tanswere to the court of certeyn thynges.

Now, Lord, quod she, Crist Jhesu, kyng of
kynges,
So wisly helpe me, as I ne may!

I have been syk, and that ful many a day.
But I be deed, so priketh it in my syde.

May I nat axe a libel, sire Somnour,
And answer there, by my procurator

To swich thyng as men wole opposen me?
Yis, quod this Somnour, pay anon, lat se,
Twelf pens to me, and I wol thee acquite.

I shal no profit han therby but lite,
My maister hath the profit, and nat I.

Com of, and lat me ryden hastily:
Yif me twelf pens, I may no lenger tarye.

Twelf pens! quod she, now lady Seinte Marie
So wisly help me out of care and synne,

This wyde world though that I sholde wyne,
Ne have I nat twelf pens withinne myn hoold;

Ye knowen wel that I am povre and cold;
Kithe youre almesse on me povre wrecche.

Nay thanne, quod he, the foule feend me fecche,
If I thexcuse, though thou shul be spilt!

Allas! quod she, God woot, I have no gilt.
Pay me! quod he, or by the sweete Seinte Anne,

As I wol bere away thy newe panne
for dette, which that thou owest me of old,

Whan that thou madest thyn housbonde coke-
wold,

I payde at hoom for thy correccioun.
Thou list, quod she, by my savacioun!

Ne was I nevere er now, wydwe ne wyf,
Somoned unto youre court in al my lyf;

Ne nevere I nas but of my body trewe!
Unto the devel blak and rough of hewe

Yeve I thy body and my panne also!
And whan the devel herde hire cursen so

Upon hir knees, he seyde in this manere:
Now, Mabely, myn owene moder deere,

Is this youre wyl in earnest, that ye seye?
The devel, quod she, so fecche hym er he deye,

And panne and al, but he wol hym repent!
Nay, olde stot! that is nat myn entente,

Quod this Somnour, for to repente me
for anythyng that I have had of thee;

I wolde I hadde thy smok and every clooth!
Now, brother, quod the devel, be nat wrooth!

Thy body and this panne been myne by right.
Thou shalt with me to helle yet tonyght,

Where thou shalt knowen of oure privetee
Moore than a maister of dyvynytee.

And with that word this foule feend hym hente;
Body and soule he with the devel wente

Wheras that Somnours han hir heritage.
And God, that maketh after his ymage

Mankynde, save and gyde us alle and some,
And leve this Somnours goode men bicom.

ORDYNGES, I koude han toold
yow, quod this frere,

hadde I had leyser for this Somnour
heere,

After the text of Crist, and Poull,
and John,

And of oure othere doctours many oon,
Swiche peynes that youre hertes myghte agryse,

Albeit so, no tonge may it devyse,
Thogh that I myghte a thousand wynter telle,

The peyne of thilke cursed hous of helle.
But, for to kepe us fro that cursed place,

Waketh, and preyeth Jhesu for his grace
So kepe us fro the temptour Sathanas.

Herke this word, beth war, as in this cas.
The leoun sit in his awayt alway

To sle the innocent, if that he may.
Disposeth ay youre hertes to withstonde

The feend that yow wolde make thral and bonde;
He may nat tempte yow over youre myght,

for Crist wol be youre champion and knyght.
And prayeth that this Somnours hem repente

Of hir mysdedes, er that the feend hem hente.
Heere endeth the freres Tale.

The prologe of the Somonours Tale.

HIS Somnour in his sty-
ropes hie stood;

Upon this frere his herte
was so wood,

That lyk an aspen/leef he
quook for ire.

Lordynges, quod he, but
o thyng I desire;

I yow biseke that, of youre
curteisye,

Syn ye han herd this false frere lye,
As suffereth me I may my tale telle!

This frere bosteth that he knoweth helle,
And God it woot, that it is litel wonder;

freres and feendes been but lyte asonder.

for, pardee! ye han ofte tyme herd telle,
How that a frere ravysshed was to helle

In spirit ones by a visoun;
And as an angel ladde hym up and down

To shewen hym the peynes that ther were,
In al the place saugh he nat a frere;

Of oother folk he saugh ynowe in wo.
Unto this angel spak the frere tho:

Now, sire, quod he, han freres swich a grace
That noon of hem shal come to this place?

Yis, quod this angel, many a millioun.
And unto Sathanas he ladde hym doun.

And now hath Sathanas, seith he, a tayl,
Brodder than of a carryk is the sayl.

Hold up thy tayl, thou Sathanas! quod he,
Shewe forth thyn ers, and lat the frere se

Where is the nest of freres in this place!
And, er than half a furlong wey of space,

Right so as bees out swarmen from an hyve,
Out of the develes ers ther gonne dryve

Twenty thousand freres in a route,
And thurghout helle swarmeden aboute,

And comen agayn as faste as they may gon,
And in his ers they crepten everychon;

He clapte his tayl agayn, and lay ful stille.
This frere, whan he looked hadde his fille

Upon the torments of this sory place,
His spirit God restored of his grace

Unto his body agayn, and he awook;
But natheles, for fere yet he quook,

So was the develes ers ay in his mynde;
That is his heritage of verray kynde.

God save yow alle, save this cursed frere!
My prologe wol I ende in this manere.

Here endeth the prologe of the Somonours
Tale.

Heere bigynneth the somonour his tale.

ORDYNGES, ther is in
Yorkshire, as I gesse,

A mersshy contree
called Holdernesse,

In which ther went a
lymytour aboute,

To preche, and eek to
begge, it is no doute.

And so bifel, that on a
day this frere

hadde preched at a chirche in his manere,
And specially, aboven every thyng,

Excited he the peple in his prechyng
To trentals, and to yeve for Goddes sake,

Wherwith men myghte hooly houses make,
Ther as divine servyce is honoured,

Nat ther as it is wasted and devoured,
Ne ther it nedeth nat for to be yeve,

As to possessioners, that mowen lyve,
Thanked be God! in wele and habundaunce.

Trentals, seyde he, deliveren fro penaunce
hir freendes soules, as wel olde as yonge,

Ye, whan that they been hastily yonge;
Nat for to holde a preest joly and gay,

he syngeth nat but o masse in a day.
Delivereth out, quod he, anon the soules;

ful hard it is, with flesschhook or with oules
To been yelawed, or to brenne, or bake;

Now spede yow hastily, for Cristes sake.
And whan this frere had seyde at his entente,

With Qui cum patre forth his wey he wente.
Whan folk in chirche had yeve him what

hem leste,
he went his wey, no lenger wolde he reste.

With scrippe and tipped staf, ytukked hie,
In every hous he gan to poure and pry,

And beggeth mele, and chese, or elles corn.
his felawe hadde a staf tipped with horn,

A peyre of tables al of yvory,
And a poyntel polysshed fetisly,

And wroote the names alwey, as he stood,
Of alle folk that yaf hym any good.

Right so as bees out swarmen from an hyve,
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Here endeth the prologe of the Somonours
Tale.

DEERE maister, quod this sike man,
How han ye fare sith that March bigan?
I saugh yow noght this fourteenyght or
moore.

God woot, quod he, laboured have I ful soore;
And specially for thy savacioun
Have I seyde many a precious orisoun,
And for oure othere freendes, God hem blesse!
I have today been at youre chirche at messe,
And seyde a sermoun after my symple wit,
Nat al after the text of hooly writ;
for it is hard to yow, as I suppose,
And therfore wol I teche yow al the glose.

Glosyng is a glorious thyng, certeyn,
for lettre sleeth, so as we clerkes seyn.
There have I taught hem to be charitable,
And spende hir good ther it is resonable;
And ther I saugh oure dame, al where is she?

Yond, in the yerd I trowe that she be,
Seide this man, and she wol come anon.
Ey, maister! welcom be ye, by Seint John!
Seide this wyf, how fare ye, hertely?

The frere ariseth up ful curteisly,
And hire embraceth in his armes narwe,
And kiste hire sweete, and chirke as a sparwe
With his typpes: Dame, quod he, right weel,
As he that is youre servant every deel.

Thanked be God, that yow yaf soule and lyf,
Yet saugh I nat this day so fair a wyf
In al the chirche, God so save me!
Ye, God amende defautes, sire, quod she,
Al gates welcome be ye, by my fey!

Graunt mercy, dame, this have I founde alwey,
But of youre grete goodnesse, by youre leve,
I wolde prey yow that ye nat yow greve,
I wole with Thomas speke a litel thowe.
Thise curats been ful negligent and slowe
To grope tendrely a conscience.

In shrift, in prechyng is my diligence,
And studie; in Petres wordes, and in Poules
I walke, and fisse cristen mennes soules,
To yelden Jhesu Crist his propre rente;
To sprede his word is set al myn entente.

NOW, by youre leve, O deere sire, quod she,
Chideth him weel, for seinte Trinitee!
He is as angry as a pissemyre,
Though that he have al that he kan desire.
Though I him wrye anyght and make hym warm,
And on hym leye my leg, outhir myn arm,
He groneth lyk oure boor, lith in oure sty.
Oother desport ryght noon of hym have I;
I may nat plesse hym in no maner cas.

O Thomas! Je vous dy, Thomas! Thomas!
This maketh the feend, this moste ben amended;
Ire is a thyng that hye God defended,
And therof wol I speke a word or two.

Now, maister, quod the wyf, er that I go,
What wol ye dyne? I wol go therabout.
Now dame, quod he, Je vous dy sanz doute,
Have I nat of a capoun but the lyvere,
And of youre softe breed nat but a shyvere,
And after that a roasted pigges heed,
But that I nolde no beest for me were deed,

Thanne hadde I with yow boomy suffisaunce,
I am a man of litel sustenaunce.
My spirit hath his fstryng in the Bible.
The body is ay so redy and penyble
To wake, that my stomak is destroyed.
I prey yow, dame, ye be nat anoyed
Though I so frendly yow my conseil shewe;
By God, I wolde nat telle it but a fewe!

NOW, sire, quod she, but o word er I go:
My child is deed withinne thise wykes two,
Soone after that ye wente out of this toun.

His deeth saugh I by revelacioun,
Seith this frere, at boom in oure dortour.
I dar wel seyn that, er that half an hour
After his deeth, I saugh hym born to blisse
In myn avisoun, so God me wisse!

So dide our sexteyn and oure fermerer,
That han been trewe freres fifty yer;
They may now, God be thanked of his loone!
Maken hir jubilee, and walke alone.
And up I roos, and al oure covent eke,
With many a teere trikyng on my cheke,

Withouten noyse or claterynge of belles;
Te deum was oure song and nothyng elles,
Save that to Crist I seyde an orisoun,
Thankyng hym of his revelacioun.

for, sire and dame, trusteth me right weel,
Oure orisons been moore effectueel,
And moore we seen of Cristes secree thynges
Than burel folk, although they weren kynges.

We lyve in poverté and in abstinence,
And burel folk in richesse and despenche
Of mete and drynke, and in hir foul delit.
We han this worldes lust al in despit.
Lazar and Dives lyveden diversly,
And diverse guerdon hadden they therby.

Whoso wol prey, he moot faste and be clene,
And fatte his soule and make his body lene.
We fare as seith thapostle; clooth and foode
Suffisen us, though they be nat ful goode.

The clenness and the fastyng of us freres
Maketh that Crist accepteth oure preyes,
Lo, Moyses fourty dayes and fourty nyght
Fasted, er that the heighe God of myght
Spak with hym in the mountayne of Synay.

With empty wombe, fastyng many a day,
Receyved he the lawe that was writen
With Goddes fynger; and Elye, wel ye witen,
In mount Oreb, er he hadde any speche
With hye God, that is oure lyves leche,
He fasted longe, and was in contemplanche.

Haron, that hadde the temple in governaunce,
And eek the othere prestes everichon,
Into the temple whan they sholde gon
To prey for the peple, and do servyse,
They nolden drynken, in no maner wyse,
No drynke, which that myght hem dronke make.

But there, in abstinence prey and wake,
Lest that they deyden; taak heede what I seye,
But they be sobere that for the peple prey,
War that! I seye namoore, for it suffiseth.
Oure Lord Jhesu, as hooly writ devyseth,
Yaf us ensample of fastyng and preyes;

Yaf us ensample of fastyng and preyes;

Therefore we mendynants, we sely freres,
Been wedded to poverté and continence,
To charite, humblesse, and abstinence,
To persecucioun for rightwinesse,
To wepyng, misericorde, and clenness;
And therfore may ye se that oure preyes,
I speke of us, we mendynants, we freres,
Been to the hye God moore acceptable
Than yowes, with youre feestes at the table.

BUT herke now, Thomas, what I shal seyn,
I ne have no text of it, as I suppose,
But I shal fynde it in a maner glose.
That specially oure sweete Lord Jhesus
Spak this by freres, when he seyde thus:

Blessed be they that poore in spirit been,
And so forth al the gospel may ye seen,
Wher it be likker oure professioun,
Or hire that swymmen in possessioun.

fy on hire pompe and on hire glotonye!
And for hir lewednesse, I hem diffye!
Me thynketh they been lyk Jovinyan,
fat as a whale, and walkyng as a swan,
Al vinolent as botel in the spence.

hir preyere is of ful greet reverence
Whan they for soules seye the Psalm of Davit,
Lo, Bu! they seye, Cor meum eructavit!
Wher folweth Cristes gospel and his foore,
But we that humble been and chaast and poore,
Workers of Goddes word, not auditours?

Therefore, right as an hawk up, at a sours,
Up springeth into their, right so prayeres
Of charitable and chaste biy freres
Maken hir sours to Goddes eres two.

Thomas! Thomas! so moote I ryde or go,
And by that lord that clepid is Seint Yve,
Nere thou oure brother, sholdestou nat thryve.
In oure chapitre praye we day and nyght
To Crist, that he thee sende heele and myght,
Thy body for to weelden hastily.

GOD woot, quod he, nothyng therof fee! I
As help me Crist, as in a fewe yerres
I han spent upon diverse manere freres
ful many a pound; yet fare I never the bet.
Certeyn my good I have almoost biset,
farwel, my gold, for it is al ago!

The frere answerde, O Thomas, dostow so?
What nedeth yow diverse freres seche?
What nedeth hym that hath a parfit leche
To sechen othere leches in the toun?

Your inconstance is youre confusioun.
Holde ye thanne me, or elles oure covent,
To praye for yow been insufficient?
Thomas, that jape nys nat worth a myte;
Your maladye is for we han to lyte.

Al yif that covent half a quarter otes;
Al yif that covent four and twenty grotes;
Al yif that frere a peny, and lat hym go.
Nay, nay, Thomas! it may nothyng be so.
What is a ferthyng worth parted in twelve?
Lo, ech thyng that is oned in itselfe

Is moore strong than whan it is toscatered.
Thomas! of me thou shalt nat been yflatered;
Thou woldest han oure labour al for noght.
The hye God, that al this world hath wrought,
Seith that the werkman worthy is his hyre.
Thomas! noght of youre tresor I desire
As for myself, but that al oure covent
To prey for yow is ay so diligent,
And for to buylden Cristes owene chirche.

Thomas! if ye wol lermen for to wirche,
Of buyldyng up of chirches may ye fynde
If it be good, in Thomas lyf of Inde.
Ye lye heere ful of anguish and of ire,
With which the devel set youre herte afyre,
And chiden heere the sely innocent,

Your wyf, that is so meke and pacient.
And therfore, Thomas, trowe me if thee leste,
Ne stryve nat with thy wyf, as for thy beste;
And ber this word away now, by thy feith,
Touchyng this thyng, lo, what the wise seith:

Withinne thyn hous ne be thou no leoun;
To thy subgits do noon oppressioun;
Ne make thynne aqueyntance nat to flee.
And, Thomas, yet eftsoones I charge thee,
Be war from hire that in thy bosom slepeth;
War fro the serpent that so slyly crepeth

Under the gras, and styngeth subtilly.
Be war, my sone, and herke paciently,
That twenty thousand men han lost hir lyves
for stryvyng with hir lemmans and hir wyves.

Now sith ye han so hooly and meke a wyf,
What nedeth yow, Thomas, to maken stryf?
Ther nys, ywys, no serpent so cruel,
Whan man tret on his tayl, ne half so fel,
As womman is, whan she hath caught an ire;
Vengeance is thanne al that they desire.

Ire is a synne, oon of the grete of sevene,
Abhomynable unto the God of hevene;
And to hymself it is destruccioun.
This every lewed viker or persoun
Kan seye, how ire engendreth homycide.
Ire is, in sooth, executour of pryde.

I koude of ire seye so muche sorwe,
My tale sholde laste til tomorwe.
And therfore prey I God bothe day and nyght,
An irous man, God sende hym litel myght.
It is greet harme and, certes, greet pitee,
To sette an irous man in heigh degree.

WHILLOM ther was an irous potestat,
As seith Senek, that, duryng his
estaat,
Upon a day out ryden knyghtes two,
And as fortune wolde that it were so,
That oon of hem cam boom, that

oother noght.
Anon the knyght bifore the juge is broght,
That seyde thus: Thou hast thy felawe slayn,
for which I deme thee to the deeth, certayn.

And to another knyght comanded he,
Go lede hym to the deeth, I charge thee!
And happed as they wente by the weye
Toward the place ther he sholde deye,
The knyght cam, which men wenden had be deed.

Thanne thoughte they, it was the beste reed,
To lede hem bothe to the juge agayn.
They seiden: Lord, the knyght ne hath nat
slayn
His felawe; heere he standeth hool alyve.
¶ Ye shul be deed, quod he, so moot I thryve!
That is to seyn, bothe oon, and two, and thre.
And to the firste knyght right thus spak he:
I dampned thee, thou most algate be deed;
And thou, also, most nedes lese thyn heed,
for thou art cause why thy felawe deyth.
And to the thridde knyght right thus he seith:
Thou hast nat doon that I comanded thee.
And thus he dide doon sleen hem alle thre.
¶ Irous Cambises was eek dronkelewe,
And ay delited hym to been a shrewe.
And so bifel a lord of his meynne,
That loved vertuous moralitee,
Seyde on a day bitwene hem two right thus:
¶ A lord is lost, if he be vicious;
And dronkenesse is eek a foul record
Of any man, and namely in a lord.
Ther is ful many an eye and many an ere,
Awaityng on a lord, and he noot where.
for Goddes love, drynk moore attemprely;
Wyn maketh man to lesen wrecchedly
his mynde, and eek his lymes everichon.
¶ The revers shaltou se, quod he, anon;
And preeve it, by thyn owene experience,
That wyn ne dooth to folk no swich offence.
Ther is no wyn bireveth me my myght
Of hand ne foot, ne of myne eyen sight.
¶ And, for despit, he drank ful muchel moore
An hondred part than he hadde doon bifoore;
And right anon, this irous, cursed wrecche
lete this knyghtes sone bifoore hym fecche.
Comandyng hym he sholde bifoore hym stonde.
And sodaynly he took his bowe in honde,
And up the streng he pulled to his ere,
And with an arwe he slow the child right there.
¶ Now, whether have I a siker hand or noon?
Quod he, is al my myght and mynde agon?
Hath wyn byrevd me myne eyen sight?
¶ What sholde I telle thanswere of the knyght?
His sone was slayn, ther is namoore to seye.
Beth war, therefore, with lordes how ye pleye.
Syngeth Placebo, and I shal, if I kan,
But if it be unto a povre man.
To a povre man men sholde his vices telle,
But nat to a lord, though he sholde go to helle.
¶ Lo, irous Cirus, thilke Percien,
How he destroyed the ryver of Gysen,
for that an hors of his was dreyn therinne.
Whan that he wente Babylaigne to wynne.
He made that the ryver was so smal
That wommen myghte wade it over al.
¶ Lo, what seyde he that so wel teche kan:
Ne be no felawe to an irous man,
Ne with no wood man walke by the weye,
Lest thee repente; ther is namoore to seye.
¶ Thomas, levee brother, lef thyn ire;
Thou shalt me fynde as just as is a squyre.
Hool nat the develes knyfe ay at thyn herte;

Thyn angre dooth thee al to soore smerte,
But shewe to me al thy confessioun.
¶ Nay, quod the sike man, by Seint Symoun!
I have be shryven this day at my curat;
I have hym toold al hoolly myn estat.
Nedeth namoore to speken of it, seith he,
But if me list, of myn humylitee.
¶ Yif me thanne of thy gold, to make oure
cloystre,
Quod he, for many a muscle and many an oystre,
Whan othere men han ben ful wel at eyse,
Hath been oure fooode, our cloystre for to reyse.
And yet, God woot, unneth the fundement
parfourned is, ne of our pavement
Nys nat a tyle yet withinne oure wones;
By God, we owen forty pound for stones!
Now help, Thomas, for hym that harwed helle!
for elles moste we oure bookes selle.
And if ye lakke oure predicacioun,
Thanne goth the world al to destruccioun,
for whoso wolde us fro this world bireve,
So God me save, Thomas, by your leve,
He wolde bireve out of this world the sonne;
for who kan teche, and werchen, as we konne?
And that is nat of litel tyme, quod he,
But syn that Elie was, or Elisee,
Han freres been, that fynde I of record,
In charitee, ythanked be our Lord.
Now Thomas, help, for seinte charitee!
And don anon he sette hym on his knee.
¶ HIS sike man wex wel ny wood for ire;
He wolde that the frere had been on
fire
With his false dissymulacioun.
¶ Swich thyng as is in my posses-
sioun,
Quod he, that may I even, and noon oother.
Ye sey me thus, how that I am youre brother?
¶ Ye, certes, quod the frere, trusteth weel;
I took oure dame oure lettre with oure seel.
¶ Now wel, quod he, and somewhat shal I yeve
Unto youre hooly covent whil I lyve,
And in thyn hand thou shalt it have anon;
On this condicioun, and oother noon;
That thou departe it so, my levee brother,
That every frere have also muche as oother.
This shaltou swere on thy professioun,
Withouthen fraude or cavillacioun.
¶ I swere it, quod this frere, by my feith!
¶ And therewithal his hand in his he leith:
Lo, heer my feith! in me shal be no lak.
¶ Now thanne, put thyn hand down by my bak,
Seyde this man, and grope wel bihynde;
Bynethe my buttok ther shaltow fynde
A thyng that I have hyd in pryvete.
¶ A! thoghte this frere, this shal go with me!
And don his hand he launcheth to the clifte,
In hope for to fynde there a yifte.
And whan this sike man felte this frere
Aboute his tuwel grope there and heere,
Amydde his hand he leet the frere a fart.
Ther nys no capul, drawyng in a cart,
That myghte have lete a fart of swich a soun.

¶ The frere up stirte as dooth a wood leoun;
A false cherl, quod he, for Goddes bones!
This hastow for despit doon, for the nones!
Thou shalt abyte this fart, if that I may!
¶ His meynne, whiche that herden this affray,
Cam lepyng in, and chaced out the frere;
And forth he gooth, with a ful angry cheere,
And sette his felawe, theras lay his stoor.
He looked as it were a wilde boor;
He grynte with his teeth, so was he wrooth.
¶ STURDY paas doon to the court he gooth,
Wheras ther woned a man of greet honour,
To whom that he was alwey confessour;
This worthy man was lord of that village.
This frere cam, as he were in a rage,
Wheras this lord sat etyng at his bord.
¶ Unnethe myghte the frere speke a word,
Unnethe laste he seyde: God yow see!
¶ This lord gan looke, and seide: Benedicitee!
¶ What, frere John, what maner world is this?
I trowe som maner thyng ther is amys;
Ye looken as the wode were ful of thevys;
Sit down anon, and tel me what youre greif is,
And it shal been amended, if I may.
¶ I have, quod he, adoun in youre village,
God yelde yow! adoun in noon so povre page,
That in this world is noon so povre page,
That he nolde have abhominacioun
Of that I have receyved in youre toun.
And yet ne greveth me nothing so soore,
As that this olde cherl, with lokkes hoore,
Blasphemed hath oure hooly covent eke.
¶ Now, maister, quod this lord, I yow biseke.
¶ No maister, sire, quod he, but servitour,
Thogh I have had in scole swich honour,
God liketh nat that Raby men us calle,
Neither in market ne in youre large halle.
¶ No fors, quod he, but tel me al youre greif.
¶ Sire, quod this frere, an odious meschief
This day bityd is to myn ordre and me;
And so per consequens to ech degree
Of hooly chirche, God amende it soone!
¶ I RE, quod the lord, ye woot what is to doone.
Distempere yow noght, ye be my confessour;
Ye been the salt of the erthe and the savour.
for Goddes love youre pacience ye holde;
Tel me youre greif. ¶ And he anon hym tolde,
As ye han herd biforn, ye woot wel what.
¶ HE lady of the hous ay stille sat
Til she had herd al what the frere sayde.
¶ E! Goddes mooder, quod she, blisful
mayde!
Is ther oght elles? telle me feithfully.
¶ Madame, quod he, how thynke ye herby?
¶ How that me thynketh? quod she; so God me
speede!
I seye, a cherle hath doon a cherles dede.
¶ What shold I seye? God lat hym nevere thee!
His sike heed is ful of vanytee,
I hold hym in a manere frenesye.
¶ Madame, quod he, by God I shal nat lye;
But I on oother weyes may be wreke,
I shal disclaundre hym, overal ther I speke,

This false blasphemour, that charged me
To parte that wol nat departed be,
To every man yliche, with meschaunce!
¶ HE lord sat stille, as he were in a traunce,
And in his herte he rolled up and doun:
How hadde this cherl ymaginacioun,
To shewe swich a probleme to the frere?
Nevere erst er now herd I of swich mateere;
I trowe the devel putte it in his mynde.
In ars metrike shal ther no man fynde,
Biforn this day, of swich a questioun.
Certes, it was a shrewed conclusioun,
That every man sholde have yliche his part,
As of the soun or savour of a fart.
O nyce proude cherl! I shrewe his face!
Lo, sires, quod the lord, with harde grace,
Who evere herd of swich a thyng er now?
To every man ylike! tel me how?
It is an impossible, it may nat be!
Ey, nyce cherl, God lete him nevere thee!
The rumblyng of a fart, and every soun,
Nis but of air reverberacioun,
And evere it wasteth life and life away.
Ther is no man kan demen, by my fey!
If that it were departed equally.
¶ What, lo, my cherl, lo, yet how shrewedly
Unto my confessour today he spak;
I holde hym certeyn a demonyak!
Now ete youre mete, and let the cherl go pleye,
Lat hym go honge hymself a devel weye!

The wordes of the lordes Squier and his kervere for
departyng of the fart on twelve.

¶ STOOD the lordes Squier at the
bord,
That harf his mete, and herde, word
by word,
Of alle thynges whiche that I have
sayd:
My lord, quod he, beth nat yvele apayd;
I koude telle, for a gowne/clooth,
To yow, sire frere, so ye be nat wrooth,
How that this fart sholde evene deled be
Among youre covent, if it lyked me.
¶ Tel, quod the lord, and thou shalt have anon
A gowne/clooth, by God and by Seint John!
¶ My lord, quod he, whan that the weder is fair,
Withouthen wynd or perturbyng of air,
Lat bryng a cartwheel here into this halle,
But looke that it have his spokes alle;
Twelve spokes hath a cartwheel comunly.
And bryng me thanne twelf freres, woot ye why?
for thrittene is a covent, as I gesse.
The confessour heere, for his worthynesse,
Shal parfourne up the nombre of his covent.
Thanne shal they knele down, by oon assent,
And to every spokes ende, in this manere,
ful sadly leye his nose shal a frere.
Your noble confessour, there God hym save!
Shal hold his nose upright, under the nave.
Thanne shal this cherl, with bely stif and toght
As any tabour, hyder been ybroght;
And sette hym on the wheel right of this cart,

**The
Somonours
Tale**

Upon the nave, and make hym lete a fart.
And ye shul seen, up peril of my lyf,
By preeve which that is demonstratif,
That equally the soun of it wol wende,
And eek the stynk, unto the spokes ende;
Save that this worthy man, your confessor,
Bycause he is a man of greet honour,
Shal have the firste fruyt, as resoun is.
The noble usage of freres yet is this,
The worthy men of hem shul first be served;
And certainly, he hath it weel disserved.
He hath today taught us so muchel good
With prechyng in the pulpit ther he stood,
That I may vouchesauf, I sey for me,
He hadde the firste smel of fartes three,
And so wolde at his covent hardily;
He bereth hym so faire and hoolily.

THE lord, the lady, and alle men save the frere,
Seyde that Jankyn spak, in this matere,
As wel as Euclide, or Protholomee,
Touchyng this cherl; they seyde subtiltee
And heigh wit made hym speken as he spak;
He nys no fool, ne no demonyak;
And Jankyn hath ywonne a newe gowne.
My tale is doon; we been almoost at towne.
Heere endeth the Somonours Tale.

**Heere foloweth the prologe of the Clerkes Tale of
Oxenford.**



PIRE Clerk of Oxenford, our
Hooste sayde,
Ye ryde as coy and stille as
dooth a mayde,
Were newe spoused, sit-
tyng at the bord;
This day ne herde I of youre
tonge a word.
Itrowe ye studie aboute som
sophyme;

But Salomon seith, Every thyng hath tyme.
for Goddes sake, as beth of bettre cheere,
It is no tyme for to studien heere.
Telle us some myrie tale, by youre fey;
for what man that is entred in a pley,
He nedes moot unto the pley assente.
But precheth nat, as freres doon in lente,

To make us for oure olde synnes wepe,
Ne that thy tale make us nat to slepe.
Telle us som murie thyng of aventures;
Your termes, youre colours, and youre figures,
Keepe hem in stoor til so be ye endite
Heigh stile, as whan that men to kynges write.
Speketh so pleyn at this tyme, we yow preye,
That we may understonde what ye seye.

THIS worthy clerk benignely answerde,
Hooste, quod he, I am under youre yerde;
Ye han of us, as now, the governance,
And therfore wol I do yow obeisance
As fer as resoun axeth, hardily.
I wol yow telle a tale which that I
Lerned at Padwe of a worthy clerk,
As preved by his wordes and his werk.
He is now deed and nayled in his cheste,
I prey to God so yeve his soule reste!

FRANCEYS PETRARK, the lauriat
poete,

Highte this clerk, whos rethorike sweete
Enlumyned al Ytaille of poetrie,
As Lynyan dide of philosophie
Or lawe, or oother art particuler;
But deeth, that wol nat suffre us dwellen heere
But as it were a twynklyng of an eye,
Hem bothe hath slayn, and alle shut we dye.

But forth to tellen of this worthy man
That taughte me this tale, as I bigan,
I seye that first with heigh stile he enditeth,
Er he the body of his tale writeth,
A proheme, in the which discryveth he
Demond, and of Saluces the contree;
And speketh of Apennyn, the hilles hye
That been the boundes of West Lombardye,
And of Mount Vesulus in special,
Whereas the Poo, out of a welle smal,
Taketh his firste spryngyng and his sours,
That estward ay encresseth in his cours
To Emeleward, to ferrare and Venyse:
The which a long thyng were to devyse.
And trewely, as to my juggement,
Me thynketh it a thyng impertinent,
Save that he wole conveyen his matere:
But this his tale, which that ye may heere.

Here endith the Clerke of Oxenford his prologe.

**Heere bigynneth the tale of the clerk
of oxenford**



PIRE, AT THE WEST SYDE OF YCHILLE,
Doun at the roote of Vesulus the colde,
A lusty playne, habundant of vitaille,
Where many a tour & toun thou mayst biholde,
That founded were in time of fadres olde,
And many another delitable sighte,
And Saluces this noble contree highte.

A markys whilom lord was of that londe,
As were his worthy eldres hym bifore;
And obeisant and redy to his honde
Were alle his liges, bothe lasse and moore.
Thus in delit he lyveth, and hath doon yooore,
Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,
Bothe of his lordes and of his commune.

Therwith he was, to speke as of lynage,
The gentilleste yborn of Lombardye;
A fair persone, and strong, and yong of age,
And ful of honour and of curteisye;
Discreet ynogh his contree for to gye,
Save in somme thynges that he was to blame,
And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

BLAME him thus, that he considereth
noght
In tyme comyng what hym myghte
bityde;
But in his lust present was al his thought,
As for to hauke and hunte on every syde;
Wel ny alle othere cures leet he slyde;
And eek he nolde, and that was worst of alle,
Wedde no wyf, for noght that may bifalle.

Only that point his peple bar so soore,

That flokmele on a day they to hym wente,
And oon of hem that wisest was of loore,
Or elles that the lord best wolde assente
That he sholde telle hym what his peple mente,
Or elles koude he shewe wel swich mateere,
He to the markys seyde as ye shul heere.

O noble markys, youre humanitee
Assureth us and yeveth us hardinesse,
As ofte as tyme is of necessitee
That we to yow mowe telle oure hevynesse;
Accepteth, lord, now for youre gentillesse,
That we with pitous herte unto yow pleyne,
And lat youre eres nat my voys desdeyne.

Al have I noght to doone in this mateere
Moore than another man hath in this place,
Yet forasmuche as ye, my lord so deere,
Han alwey shewed me favour and grace,
I dar the better aske of yow a space
Of audience, to shewen oure requeste,
And ye, my lord, to doon right as yow leste.

for certes, lord, so wel us liketh yow
And al youre werk, and evere han doon, that we
Ne koude nat us self devyysen how
We myghte lyven in moore felicitye,
Save o thyng, lord, if it youre wille be,
That for to been a wedded man yow leste,
Thanne were youre peple in sovereyn hertes reste.

Boweth youre nekke under that blisful yok
Of soveraynetee, noght of servyse,
Which that men clepeth spousaille or wedlok;
And thenketh, lord, among youre thoughtes wyse,
How that oure dayes passe in sondry wyse;
For thogh we slepe, or wake, or rome, or ryde,
Hy fleeth the tyme, it nyl no man abyde.

And thogh youre grene youthe floure as yit,
In crepeth age alwey, as stille as stoon,
And deeth manaceth every age, and smyt
In ech estat, for ther escapeth noon;
And al so certein as we knowe echoon
That we shul deye, as uncerteyn we alle
Been of that day whan deeth shal on us falle.

Accepteth thanne of us the trewe entente,
That nevere yet refuseden thyn heeste,
And we wol, lord, if that ye wol assente,
Chese yow a wyf in short tyme, atte leeste,
Born of the gentilleste and of the meeste
Of al this land, so that it oghte seme
Honour to God and yow, as we kan deeme.

Delivere us out of al this bisy drede,
And taak a wyf, for hye Goddes sake;
for if it so bifelle, as God forbede,
That thurgh youre deeth youre lyne sholde
slake,
And that a straunge successour sholde take
Your heritage, O, wo were us alyve!
Wherfore we pray yow hastily to wyve.

IR meeke preyere, and hir pitous cheere,
Made the markys herte han pitee.
Ye wol, quod he, myn owene peple deere,
To that I nevere erst thoughte streyne me,
I me rejoysed of my libertee,
That seelde tyme is founde in mariage;
Ther I was free, I moot been in servage.

But natheles, I se youre trewe entente,
And trust upon youre wit, and have doon ay;
Wherfore, of my free wyl, I wol assente
To wedde me, as soone as evere I may.
But thereas ye han profred me this day
To chese me a wyf, I yow relese
That choys, and prey yow of that profre cesse.

for God it woot, that children ofte been
Unlyk hir worthy eldres hem bifore;
Bountee comth al of God, nat of the streen
Of which they been engendred and ybore;
I truste in Goddes bountee, and therfore
My mariage, and myn estat and reste,
I hym bitake; he may doon as hym leste.

Lat me alone in chesynge of my wyf,
That charge upon my bak I wol endure;
But I yow preyere, and charge upon youre lyf,
That what wyf that I take, ye me assure
To worshipec hire, whil that hir lyf may dure,
In word and werk, bothe heere and everywhere,
As she an emperours doghter weere.

And forthermoore, this shal ye swere, that ye
Agayn my choys shul neither grucche ne stryve;
for sith I shal forgoon my libertee
At your requeste, as evere moot I thryve,
Theras myn herte is set, ther wol I wyve;
And, but ye wole assente in this manere,
I prey yow, spekeþ namoore of this matere.

With hertely wyl they sworn, and as-
sente
To al this thyng, ther seyde no wight na;
Bisekyng hym of grace, er that they wenten,
That he wolde graunten hem a certein day
Of his spousaille, as soone as evere he may;
for yet alwey the peple somewhat dredde
Lest that this markys no wyf wolde wedde.

He graunten hem a day, swich as hym leste,
On which he wolde be wedded sikerly,
And seyde, he dide al this at hir requeste;
And they, with humble entente, buxomly
Knelyng upon hir knees ful reverently,
Hym thonken alle; and thus they han an ende
Of hire entente, and boon agayn they wende.

And heerupon he to his officeres
Comaundeth for the feste to purveye;
And to his privee knyghtes and squieres
Swich charge yaf, as hym liste on hem leye;
And they to his comaundement obeye,
And ech of hem dooth al his diligence
To doon unto the feeste reverence.

Explicit prima pars.



Incipit secunda pars.



FER FRO THILKE DALAYS HONUR-
ABLE

Theras this markys shoop his mariage,
Ther stood a throop, of site delitable,
In which that poure folk of that village
Hadden hir beestes and hir herbergage,
And of hire labour tooke hir sustenance,
After that the erthe yaf hem habundance.

AMONGES thise poure folk ther
dwelte a man
Which that was holden povrest of
hem alle;
But hye God som tyme senden kan
His grace into a litel oxes stalle:
Janicula men of that throop hym calle.
A doghter hadde he, fair ynogh to sighte,
And Grisildis this yonge mayden highte.

But for to speke of vertuous beautee,
Thanne was she oon the faireste under sonne;
for pourelliche yfostred up was she,
No likerous lust was thurgh hire herte yronne;
Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne
She drank, and for she wolde vertu plesse,
She knew wel labour, but noon ydel ese.

But thogh this mayde tendre were of age,
Yet in the brest of hire virginitee
Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage,
And in greet reverence and charitee
Hir olde poure fader fostred shее;
A fewe sheep, spynnynge, on feeld she kepte,
She wolde noght been ydel til she slepte.

And whan she homward cam, she wolde brynge
Wortes, or other herbes, tymes ofte,

The whiche she shredden and seeth for hir lyvyng,
And made hir bed ful harde and nothing softe;
And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf on lofte
With everich obeisaunce and diligence
That child may doon to fadres reverence.

AND Grisilde, this povre creature,
Ful ofte sithe this markys sette his eye
As he on huntyng rood paraventure;
And whan it fil that he myghte hire espye,
He noght with wantowne lookyng of folye
His eyen caste on hire, but in sad wyse
Upon hir chiere he gan hym ofte avyse,

Commendynge in his herte hir wommanhede,
And eek hir vertu, passynge any wight
Of so yong age, as wel in chiere as dede,
for thogh the peple hadde no greet insight
In vertu, he considered ful right
Hir bountee, and disposed that he wolde
Wedde hire only, if evere he wedde sholde.

THE day of weddyng cam, but no wight kan
Telle what womman that it sholde be;
For which mervelle wondred many a man,
And seyden, whan they were in privetee,
Wol nat oure lord yet leve his vanytee?
Wol he nat wedde? alas! alas! the while!
Why wole he thus hymself and us bigile?

But natheles this markys hath doon make
Of gemmes, set in gold and in asure,
Brooches and rynges, for Grisildis sake;
And of hir clothynge took he the mesure
By a mayden ylyke to hir stature,
And eek of othere ornementes alle
That unto swich a weddyng sholde falle.

THE time of undren of the same day
Approcheth, that this weddyng sholde be;
And al the paleys put was in array,
Bothe halle and chambres, ech in his degree;
Houses of office stuffed with plentee,
Ther maystow seen of deynthevous vitaille
That may be found, as fer as last Ytaille,

This roial markys, richely arrayed,
Londes and ladyes in his compaignye,
The whiche that to the feeste were yprayed,
And of his retenue the bachelrye,
With many a soun of sondry melodye,
Unto the village, of the which I tolde,
In this array the righte wey han holde.

GRISILDE of this, God woot, ful innocent
That for hire shapen was al this array,
To fecchen water at a welle is went,
And cometh hoom as soone as evere she may.
for wel she hadde herd seyde, that thilke day
The markys sholde wedde, and, if she myghte,
She wolde fayn han seyn som of that sighte.

She thoghte, I wole with othere maydens stonde,
That been my felawes, in oure dore, and se

The markysesse, and therefore wol I fonde
To doon at hoom, as soone as it may be,
The labour which that longeth unto me;
And thanne I may at leyser hir biholde,
If she this wey unto the castel holde.

AND as she wolde over hir thresshold gon
The markys cam, and gan hire for to calle;
And she set down hir water pot anon
Beside the thresshold, in an oxes stalle,
And down upon hir knes she gan to falle,
And with sad contenance kneleth stille
Til she had herd what was the lordes wille.

This thoughtful markys spak unto this mayde
ful sobrelly, and seyde in this manere:
Where is youre fader, Grisildis? he sayde;
And she with reverence, in humble cheere,
Answerde, Lord, he is al redy heere.
And in she gooth withouten lenger lette,
And to the markys she hir fader fette.

BY the hand thanne took this olde man,
And seyde thus, whan he hym hadde asyde,
Janicula, I neither may ne kan
Lenger the plesance of myn herte hyde.
If that thou vouchesauf, whatso bityde,
Thy doghter wol I take, er that I wende,
As for my wyf, unto hir lyves ende.

Thou lovest me, I woot it wel, certeyn,
And art my feithful lige man ybore;
And al that liketh me, I dar wel seyn,
It liketh thee, and specially therfore,
Tel me that poynt that I have seyde bifore,
If that thou wolt unto that purpos drawe,
To take me as for thy sone-in-lawe?

THIS sodeyn cas this man astonyed so,
That reed he wex, abayst, and al quakyng
He stood; unnethes seyde he wordes mo,
But oonly thus: Lord, quod he, my wyllyng
Is as ye wole, ne ayeysn youre likyng
I wol nothyng; ye be my lord so deere;
Right as yow lust governeth this mateere.

YET wol I, quod this markys softly,
That in thy chambre I and thou and she
Have a collacioun, and wostow why?
for I wol axe if it hire wille be
To be my wyf, and reule hire after me;
And al this shal be doon in thy presence,
I wol noght speke out of thyn audience.

AND in the chambre whil they were aboute
Hir tretys, which as ye shal after heere,
The peple cam unto the hous withoute,
And wondred hem in how honeste manere,
And tentify, she kepte hir fader deere.
But outrelly Grisildis wondre myghte,
for nevere erst ne saugh she swich a sighte.

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned
To seen so greet a gest come in that place;

She nevere was to swiche gestes woned,
for which she looked with ful pale face.
But shortly forth this tale for to chace,
These am the wordes that the markys sayde
To this benigne verray feithful mayde:

GRISILDE, he seyde, ye shal wel understonde
It liketh to youre fader and to me
That I yow wedde, and eek it may so stonde,
As I suppose ye wol that it so be;
But thise demandes axe I first, quod he,
That, sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,
Wol ye assente, or elles yow avyse?

I seye this, be ye redy with good herte
To al my lust, and that I frely may,
As me best thynketh, do yow laughe or smerte,
And nevere ye to gruche it, nyght ne day?
And eek whan I seye Ye, ne sey nat Nay,
Neither by word ne frownyng contenance;
Swere this, and heere I swere oure alliance.

ANDRYNGE upon this word, quak-
yng for drede,
She seyde, Lord, undigne and unworthy
Am I to thilke honour that ye me beede;
But as ye wole yourself, right so wol I.
And heere I swere that nevere wyllyngly
In werk ne thocht I nyl yow disobeye,
for to be deed, though me were looth to deye.

THIS is ynogh, Grisilde myn, quod he,
And forth he gooth with a ful sobre cheere
Out at the dore, and after that cam she,
And to the peple he seyde in this manere,
This is my wyf, quod he, that standeth heere;
Honoureth hire, and loveth hire, I preye,
Whoso me loveth; ther is namore to seye.

AND for that nothing of hir olde geere
She sholde bryng into his hous, he bad
That wommen sholde dispoillen hire right there;
Of which thise ladyes were nat right glad
To handle hir clothes wherinne she was clad;
But natheles this mayde, bright of hewe,
fro foot to heed they clothed han al newe.

Hir heris han they kembd, that lay untressed
fulrudely, and with hir fynngres smale
A corone on hire heed they han ydressed,
And sette hire ful of nowches grete and smale.
Of hire array what sholde I make a tale?
Unnethe the peple hire knew for hire fairnesse,
Whan she translated was in swich richesse.

HIS markys hath hir spoused with a ryng
Brought for the same cause, and thanne hire
sette
Upon an hors, snow-whit and wel amblyng,
And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,
With joyful peple that hire ladde and mette,
Conveyed hire, and thus the day they spende
In revel, til the sonne gan descende.

And, shortly forth this tale for to chace,
I seye that to this newe markysesse
God hath swich favour sent hire of his grace,
That it ne semed nat by likynesse
That she was born and fed in rudenesse,
As in a cote, or in an oxen stalle,
But norissed in an emperours halle.

To every wight she woxen is so deere
And worshipful, that folk ther she was bore
And from hire birthe knewe hire yere by yere,
Unnethe trowed they, but dorste han swore
That to Janicle, of which I spak bifore,
She doghter nas, for, as by conjecture,
Hem thoughte she was another creature.

for thogh that evere vertuous was she,
She was encessed in swich excellence
Of thewes goode, yset in heigh bountee,
And so discreet and fair of eloquence,
So benigne, and so digne of reverence,
And koude so the peples herte embrace,
That ech hire lovede that looked on hir face.

Noght oonly of Saluces in the toun
Publiced was the bountee of hir name,
But eek beside in many a regiou,
If oon seide wel, another seyde the same.
So spradde of hire heighe bountee the fame,
That men and wommen, as wel yonge as olde,
Goon to Saluce, upon hir to biholde.

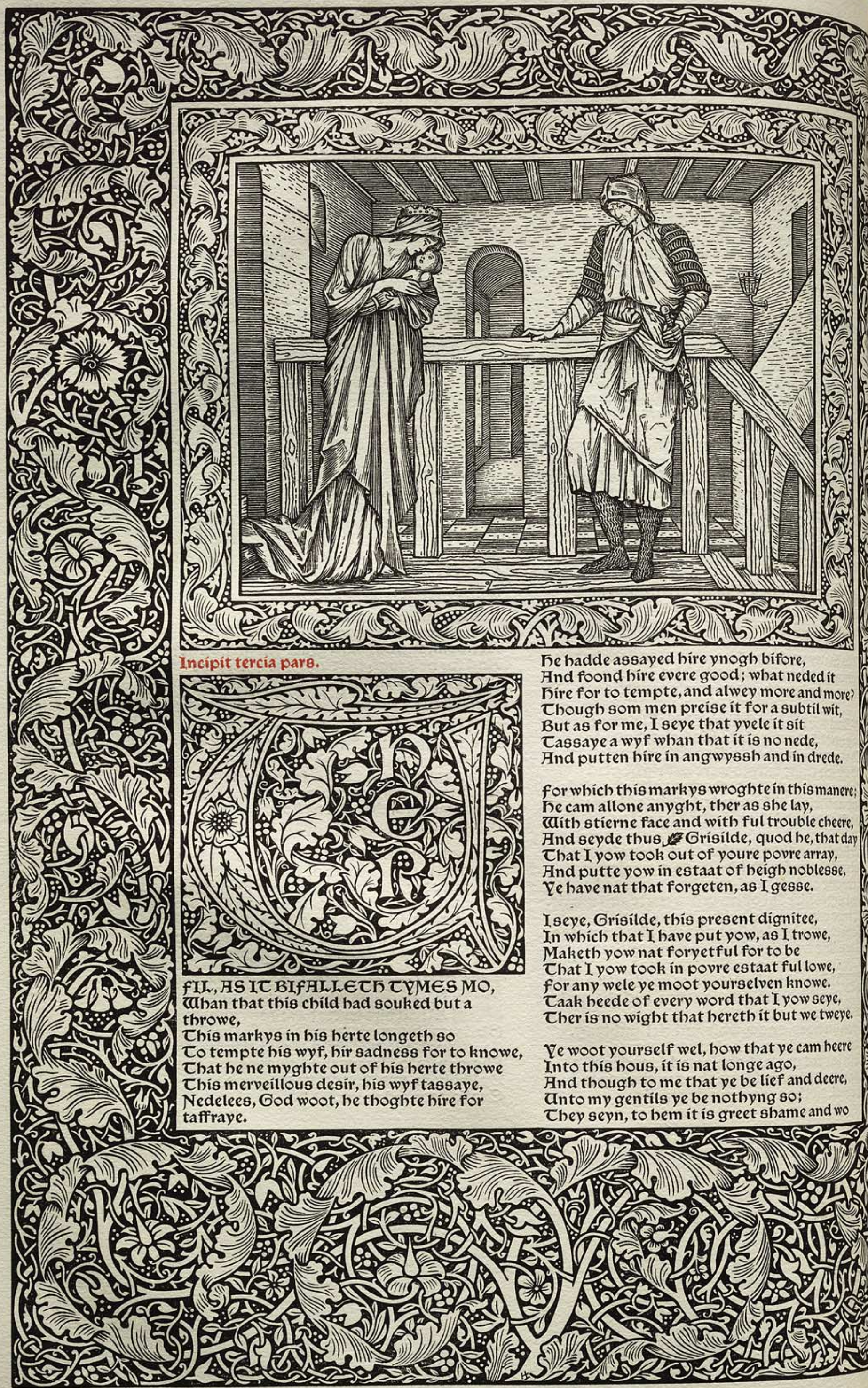
Thus Walter lowely, nay, but roially,
Wedded with fortunat honestetee,
In Goddes pees lyveth ful esily
At hoom, and outward grace ynogh had he;
And for he saugh that under lowe degree
Was ofte vertu hid, the peple hym heelde
A prudent man, and that is seyn ful seelde.

Nat oonly this Grisildis thurgh hir wit
Koude al the feet of wyfly homlynesse,
But eek, whan that the cas required it,
The commune profit koude she redresse.
Ther nas discord, rancour, ne hevynesse,
In al that land, that she ne koude apese,
And wisely bryng hem alle in reste and ese.

Thogh that hire housbonde absent were anon,
If gentil men, or othere of hire contree
Were wrothe, she wolde bryngen hem aton;
So wise and rype wordes hadde she,
And juggements of so greet equitee,
That she from hevne sent was, as men wende,
Peple to save and every wrong tamende.

NAT longe tyme after that this Grisild
Was wedded, she a doghter hath ybore,
Al had hire levere have born a knave child.
Glad was this markys and the folk therfore;
for thogh a mayde child coome al bifore,
She may unto a knave child atteyne
By likihede, syn she nys nat bareyne.

Explicit secunda pars.



Incipit tertia pars.



PIL, AS IT BIFALLETH Tymes mo,
Whan that this child had souked but a
throwe,
This markys in his herte longeth so
To tempte his wyf, hir sadness for to knowe,
That he ne myghte out of his herte throwe
This merveillous desir, his wyf tassaye,
Nedeless, God woot, he thoughte hire for
taffraye.

He hadde assayed hire ynogh bifore,
And foond hire evere good; what neded it
Hire for to tempte, and alwey more and more;
Though som men preise it for a subtil wit,
But as for me, I seye that yuele it sit
Tassaye a wyf whan that it is no nede,
And putten hire in angwyssh and in drede.

for which this markys wroghte in this manere;
He cam allone anyght, ther as she lay,
With stierne face and with ful trouble cheere,
And seyde thus, Grisilde, quod he, that day
That I yow took out of youre povre array,
And putte yow in estat of heigh noblesse,
Ye have nat that forgeten, as I gesse.

I seye, Grisilde, this present dignitee,
In which that I have put yow, as I trowe,
Maketh yow nat forgetful for to be
That I yow took in povre estat ful lowe,
for any wele ye moot yourselven knowe.
Taak heede of every word that I yow seye,
Ther is no wight that hereth it but we tweye.

Ye woot yourself wel, how that ye cam here
Into this hous, it is nat longe ago,
And though to me that ye be lief and deere,
Unto my gentils ye be nothing so;
They seyn, to hem it is greet shame and wo

for to be subgetts and been in servage
To thee, that born art of a smal village.

And namely sith thy doghter was ybore,
Thise wordes han they spoken doutelees;
But I desire, as I have doon bifore,
To lyve my lyf with hem in reste and pees;
I may nat in this caas be recchelees.
I moot doon with thy doghter for the beste,
Nat as I wolde, but as my peple leste.

And yet, God woot, this is ful looth to me;
But natheles withoute youre wityng
I wol nat doon, but this wol I, quod he,
That ye to me assente, as in this thyng.
Shewe now youre pacience in youre werkynge
That ye me highte and swore in youre village
That day that maked was oure mariage.

WHAN she had herd al this, she noight
ameved,
Neither in word, or chiere, or countenance;
for, as it semed, she was nat agrevd:
She seyde, Lord, al lyth in youre plesauce,
My child and I with hertely obeisaunce,
Been youre al, and ye mowe save or spille
Your owene thyng; werketh after youre wille.

Ther may nothing, God so my soule save!
Liken to yow that may displese me;
Ne I ne desire nothing for to have,
Ne drede for to leese, save oonly ye;
This wyl is in myn herte, and ay shal be.
No lengthe of tyme, or deeth, may this deface,
Ne chaunge my corage to another place.

GHAD was this markys of hire answerynge,
But yet he feyned as he were nat so;
Al drery was his cheere and his lookyng,
Whan that he sholde out of the chambre go.
Soone after this, a furlong wey or two,
He prively hath toold al his entente
Unto a man, and to his wyf hym sente.

A maner sergeant was this privee man,
The which that feithful ofte he founden hadde
In thynges grete, and eek swich folk wel kan
Doon execucioun on thynges badde.
The lord knew wel that he hym loved and dradde;
And whan this sergeant wiste his lordes wille,
Into the chambre he stalked hym ful stille.

Madame, he seyde, ye moot foryeve it me,
Though I do thyng to which I am constreyned;
Ye been so wys that ful wel knowe ye
That lordes heestes mowe nat been yfeyned;
They mowe wel been biwailled and compleyned,
But men moot nede unto hire lust obeye,
And so wol I; ther is namore to seye.

This child I am comanded for to take,
And spak namore, but out the child he hente
Despitously, and gan a cheere make
As though he wolde han slayn it er he wente.
Grisildis moot al suffren and consente;

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And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille,
And leet this cruel sergeant doon his wille.

Suspicious was the diffame of this man,
Suspect his face, suspect his word also;
Suspect the tyme in which he this bigan.
Allas! hir doghter that she loved so,
She wende he wolde han slawen it right tho.
But natheles she neither weeped ne syked,
Consentyng hire to that the markys lyked.

But atte laste speken she bigan,
And mekely she to the sergeant preyde,
So as he was a worthy gentil man,
That she moste kisse hir child er that it deyde;
And in hir barm this litel child she leyde
With ful sad face, and gan the child to kisse,
And lulled it, and after gan it blisse.

And thus she seyde in hire benigne voys,
Fare weel, my child; I shal thee nevere see!
But, sith I thee have marked with the croys,
Of thilke fader, blessed moot he be,
That for us deyde upon a croys of tree.
Thy soule, litel child, I hym bitake,
for this nyght shaltow dyen for my sake.

I trowe that to a norice in this cas
It had been hard this reuthe for to se;
Wel myghte a mooder thanne han cryd, Allas!
But natheles, so sad stedefast was she,
That she endured al adversitee,
And to the sergeant mekely she sayde,
Have heer agayn youre litel yonge mayde.

Gooth now, quod she, & dooth my lordes heeste;
But o thyng wol I prey yow of youre grace,
That, but my lord forbad yow, atte leeste
Burieth this litel body in som place
That beestes ne no briddes it torace.
But he no word wol to that purpos seye,
But took the child and wente upon his weye.

THIS sergeant cam unto his lord ageyn,
And of Grisildis wordes and hire cheere
He tolde hym point for point, in short and
pleyn,
And hym presenteth with his doghter deere.
Somwhat this lord hath routhe in his manere;
But natheles his purpos heeld he stille,
As lordes doon whan they wol han hir wille;

And bad his sergeant that he prively
Sholde this child ful softe wynde and wrappe
With alle circumstances tendrely,
And carie it in a cofre or in a lappe;
But, upon peyne his heed of for to swappe,
That no man sholde knowe of his entente.
Ne whenne he cam, ne whider that he wente;

But at Boloigne to his suster deere,
That thilke tyme of Danik was countesse,
He sholde it take, and shewe hire this mateere,
Bisekyng hire to doon hire bisynesse
This child to fostre in alle gentillesse;

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And whos child that it was he bad hir hyde
From every wight, for ought that may bityde.

The sergeant gooth, and hath fulfilled this
thyng;
But to this markys now retourne we;
for now gooth he ful faste ymaginyng
If by his wyves cheere he myghte se,
Or by hire word aperceyve that she
were chaunged; but he nevere hire koude fynde

But evere in oon ylike sad and kynde.

As glad, as humble, as bisy in servyse,
And eek in love, as she was wont to be,
Was she to hym in every maner wyse;
Ne of hir doghter noght a word spak she.
Noon accident for noon adversitee
Was seyn in hire, ne nevere hir doghter name
Ne nempned she, in earnest nor in game.

Explicit tercia pars. Sequitur pars quarta.



THIS ESTHAT ther passed been foure yere
Er she with childe was; but, as God wolde,
A knave child she bar by this Walter,
ful gracious and fair for to biholde.
And whan that folk it to his fader tolde,
Nat oonly he, but al his contree, merye
Was for this child, and God they thanke and herye.

Whan it was two yere old, and fro the brest
Departed of his norice, on a day
This markys caughte yet another lest
To tempte his wyf yet after, if he may.
O nedelees was she tempted in assay!
But wedded men ne knowe no mesure,
Whan that they fynde a pacient creature.

Wyf, quod this markys, ye han herd er this,
My peple sikly berthoure mariage,

And namely, sith my sone yboren is,
Now is it worse than evere in aloure age.
The murmure sleeth myn herte and my corage;
for to myne eres comth the voys so smerte,
That it wel ny destroyed hath myn herte.

Now sey they thus: Whan Walter is agoon,
Thanne shal the blood of Janicle succede
And been oure lord, for oother have we noon;
Swiche wordes seith my peple, out of drede.
Wel oughte I of swich murmur taken heede;
for certainly I drede swich sentence,
Though they nat pleyne speke in myn audience.

I wolde lyve in pees, if that I myghte;
Wherfore I am disposed outrely,
As I his suster servede by nyghte,
Right so thanke I to serve hym prively.
This warne I yow, that ye nat sodeynly
Out of youreself for no wo sholde outrely,
Beth pacient, and therof I yow preye.

I have, quod she, seyde thus, and evere shal,
I wol nothing, ne nyl nothing, certayn,
But as yow list; naught greveth me at al,
Though that my doghter and my sone be slayn
At youre comandement; this is to sayn,
I have noght had no part of children tweyne,
But first siknesse, and after wo and peyne.

Ye been oure lord, dooth with youre owene thyng
Right as yow list; axeth no reed at me;
for as I leste at hoom al my clothyng,
Whan I first cam to yow, right so, quod she,
Leste I my wyl, and al my libertee,
And took youre clothyng; wherfore I yow preye,
Dooth youre plessaunce, I wol youre lust obeye.

And certes, if I hadde prescience
Your wyl to knowe er ye youre lust me tolde,
I wolde it doon withouten negligence;
But now I woot youre lust and what ye wolde,
Al youre plessaunce ferme and stable I holde;
for wiste I that my deeth wolde do yow ese,
Right gladly wolde I dyen, yow to plesse.

Deeth may noght make no comparisoun
Unto youre love. And whan this markys sey
The constance of his wyf, he caste adoun
his eyen two, and wondreth that she may
In pacience suffre al this array.
And forth he goth with dreery contenance,
But to his herte it was ful greet plessaunce.

THIS ugly sergeant, in the same wyse
That he hire doghter caughte, right so he,
Or worse, if men worse kan devyse,
Hath hent hire sone, that ful was of beautee.
And evere in oon so pacient was she,
That she no chiere maade of hevynesse,
But kiste hir sone, and after gan it blesse;

Save this: she preyde hym, that if he myghte,
Hir litel sone he wolde in erthe grave,

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His tendre lymes, delicaat to sighte,
fro fowles and fro beestes for to save;
But she noon answer of hym myghte have.
He wente his wey, as hym nothyng ne roghte;
But to Boloigne he tendrely it broghte.

THIS markys wondreth evere lenger the moore
Upon hir pacience, and if that he
Ne hadde soothly knowen therbifoore
That partly hir children loved she,
He wolde have wend that of som subtiltee,
And of malice, or for cruell corage,
That she hadde suffred this with sad visage.

But wel he knew, that next hymself, certayn,
She loved hir children best in every wyse.
But now of wommen wolde I axen fayn,
If this assayes myghte nat suffice?
What koude a sturdy housbonde moore devyse
To preeve hire wyfhod and hir stedfastnesse,
And he continuyng evere in sturdinesse?

But ther been folk of swich condicioun
That, whan they have a certein purpos take,
They kan nat stynte of hire entencioun,
But right as they were bounden to a stake
They wol nat of that firste purpos slake.
Right so this markys fullliche hath purposed
To tempte his wyf, as he was first disposed.

He waiteth, if by word or contenance
That she to hym was changed of corage;
But nevere koude he fynde variance;
She was ay oon in herte and in visage;
And ay the forther that she was in age,
The moore trewe, if that it were possible,
She was to hym in love, and moore penyble.

for which it semed thus, that of hem two
Ther nas but o wyl; for, as Walter leste,
The same lust was hire plessaunce also;
And, God be thanked, al fit for the beste.
She shewed wel, for no worldly unreste
A wyf, as of hirself, nothing ne sholde
Wille in effect, but as hir housbonde wolde.

The sclaudre of Walter ofte and wyde spradde,
That of a cruell herte he wikkedly,
for he a povre woman wedded hadde,
hath mordred bothe his children prively.
Swich murmure was among hem comunly.
No wonder is, for to the peples ere
Ther cam no word but that they mordred were.

for which, wheras his peple therbifoore
Hadde loved hym wel, the sclaudre of his diffame
Made hem that they hym hatede therfore;
To been a mordre is an hateful name.
But nathelees, for earnest ne for game,
He of his cruell purpos nolde stente;
To tempte his wyf was set al his entente.

Whan that his doghter twelf yere was of age,
He to the court of Rome, in subtil wyse

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Enformed of his wyl, sente his message,
Comaundyng hem swiche bulles to devyse
As to his cruell purpos may suffyse,
How that the pope, as for his peples reste,
Bad hym to wedde another, if hym leste.

I seye, he bad they sholde countrefete
The popes bulles, makynge mencion
That he hath leve his firste wyf to lete,
As by the popes dispensacioun,
To stynte rancour and dissencioun
Bitwixe his peple and hym; thus seyde the bulle,
The which they han publiced atte fulle.

The rude peple, as it no wonder is,
Wenden ful wel that it hadde be right so;
But whan thise tidynges cam to Grisildis,
I deeme that hire herte was ful wo.
But she, ylike sad for everemo,
Disposed was, this humble creature,
Thadversitee of fortune al tendure,

Abidyng evere his lust and his plesance
To whom that she was yeven, herte and al,
As to hire verray worldly suffisance;
But shortly if this storie I tellen shal,
This markys writen hath in special
A lettre in which he sheweth his entente,

And secretly he to Boloigne it sente.

To the ert of Panyk, which that hadde tho
Wedded his suster, preyde he specially
To bryngen hoom agayn his children two
In honourable estaat al openly.
But o thyng he hym preyde outrely,
That he to no wight, though men wolde en-
quere,
Sholde nat telle, whos children that they were,

But seye, the mayden sholde ywedded be
Unto the markys of Saluce anon.
And as this ert was preyed, so dide he;
for at day set he on his wey is goon
Toward Saluce, and lordes many oon
In riche array, this mayden for to gyde,
Hir yonge brother ridyng hire bisyde.

Arrayed was toward hir mariage
This fresshe mayde, ful of gemmes cleere;
Hir brother, which that seven yer was of age,
Hrrayed eek ful fressh in his manere.
And thus in greet noblesse and with glad
cheere,
Toward Saluces shapyng hir journey,
fro day to day they ryden in hir wey.

Explicit quarta pars.

Sequitur pars quinta.



AL THIS, AFTER HIS MIKKE USAGE,
This markys, yet his wyf to tempte moore
To the outtreste preeve of hir corage,
fully to han experience and loore
If that she were as stedefast as bifore,
he on a day, in open audience,
ful boistously hath seyde hire this sentence:

Certes, Grisilde, I hadde ynogh plesance
To han yow to my wyf for youre goodnesse
As for youre trouthe & for youre obeisance,
Noght for youre lynage ne for youre richesse;
But now knowe I, in verray soothfastnesse,
That in greet lordshipe, if I wel avyse,
Ther is greet servitude in sondry wyse.

I may nat doon as every plowman may;
My peple me constreyneth for to take
Another wyf, and crien day by day;
And eek the pope, rancour for to slake,
Consenteth it, that dar I undertake;
And treweliche thus muche I wol yow seye,
My newe wyf is comynge by the weye.

Be strong of herte, and voyde anon hir place,
And thilke dower that ye broghten me,
Caak it agayn, I graunte it of my grace;
Retourneth to youre fadres hous, quod he;
No man may alwey han prosperitee;
With evne herte I rede yow tendure
This strook of fortune or of aventure.

AND she answerde agayn in pacience:
My lord, quod she, I woot, and wiste
alwey
how that bitwixen youre magnificence
And my poverté no wight kan ne may
Maken comparison; it is no nay.
I ne heeld me nevere digne in no manere
To be your wyf, no, ne your chamberere.

And in this hous, ther ye me lady maade,
The heighe God take I for my witesse,

And also wysly he my soule glaade,
I nevere heeld me lady ne maistresse,
But humble servant to youre worthynesse,
And evere shal, whil that my lyf may dure,
Aboven every worldly creature.

That ye so longe of youre benignitee
han holden me in honour and nobleye,
Wheras I was noght worthy for to bee,
That thonke I God and yow, to whom I preyde
foryelde it yow; ther is namore to seye.
Unto my fader gladly wol I wende
And with hym dwelle unto my lyves ende.

Ther I was fostred of a child ful smal,
Til I be deed, my lyf ther wol I lede
A wydwe clene, in body, herte and al,
for sith I yaf to yow my maydenbede,
And am youre trewe wyf, it is no drede,
God shilde swich a lordes wyf to take
Another man to housbonde or to make.

And of youre newe wyf, God of his grace
So graunte yow wele and prosperitee:
for I wol gladly yelden hire my place,
In which that I was blisful wont to bee,
for sith it liketh yow, my lord, quod shee,
That whilom weren al myn hertes reste,
That I shal goon, I wol goon whan yow leste.

But theras ye me profre swich dowaire
As I first broghte, it is wel in my mynde
It were my wrecched clothes, nothyng faire,
The whiche to me were hard now for to fynde.
O goode God! how gentil and how kynde
Ye semed by youre speche and youre visage
The day that makid was oure mariage!

But sooth is seyde, algate I fynde it trewe,
for in effect it preved is on me,
Love is noght oold as whan that it is newe.
But certes, lord, for noon adversitee,
To dyen in the cas, it shal nat bee
That evere in word or werk I shal repente
That I yow yaf myn herte in hool entente.

My lord, ye woot that, in my fadres place,
Ye dide me streepe out of my povre wede,
And richely me cladden, of youre grace.
To yow broghte I noght elles, out of drede,
But feith and nakednesse and maydenbede;
And heere agayn my clothyng I restooore,
And eek my weddingryng, for everemore.

The remenant of youre jueles redy be
Inwith youre chambre, dar I sauflly sayn;
Naked out of my fadres hous, quod she,
I cam, and naked moot I turne agayn.
At youre plesance wol I folwen fayn;
But yet I hope it be nat youre entente
That I smoklees out of youre paleys wente.

Ye koude nat doon so dishoneste a thyng,

That thilke wombe in which youre children leye
Sholde, bifore the peple, in my walkyng,
Be seyn al bare; wherfore I yow preye,
Lat me nat lyk a worm go by the weye:
Remembre yow, myn owene lord so deere,
I was youre wyf, though I unworthy weere.

Wherfore, in guerdon of my maydenhede,
Which that I broghte, and noght agayn I bere,
As voucheth sauf to yeve me, to my meede,
But swich a smok as I was wont to were,
That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here
That was youre wyf; and heer take I my leue
Of yow, myn owene lord, lest I yow greve.

THE smok, quod he, that thou hast on
thy bak,
Lat it be stille, and bere it forth with thee.

But wel unnethes thilke word he spak,
But wente his wey for routhe and for pitee.
Bifore the folk hisselven strepeth she,
And in hir smok, with heed and foot al bare,
Toward hir fader hous forth is she fare.

THE folk hire folwe wepyng in hir weye,
And fortune ay they cursen as they
goon;

But she fro wepyng kepte hire eyen dreye,
Ne in this tyme word ne spak she noon.
Hir fader, that this tidynge herde anon,
Curseth the day and tyme that nature
Shoop hym to been a lyves creature.

for out of doute this olde povre man
Was evere in suspect of hir mariage;
for evere he demed, sith that it bigan,
That whan the lord fulfild hadde his corage,



PBOLOIGNE IS THIS ERL OF PANYK
COME,
Of which the fame up sprang to moore and
lesse,
And in the peples eres alle and some

hym wolde thynke it were a disparage
To his estat so lowe for talighte,
And voyden hire as soone as ever he myghte.

AGHYNS his doghter hastiliche goth he,
for he by noyse of folk knew hire
comynge,
And with hire olde coote, as it myghte be,
He covered hire, ful sorwefully wepyng;
But on hire body myghte he it nat brynge,
for rude was the clooth, and moore of age
By dayes fele than at hire mariage.

Thus with hire fader, for a certeyn space,
Dwellet this flour of wyfly pacience,
That neither by hire wordes ne hire face
Bifore the folk, ne eek in hire absence,
Ne shewed she that hire was doon offence;
Ne of hire heighe estat no remembrance
Ne hadde she, as by hire contenance.

No wonder is, for in hire grete estat
Hire goost was evere in pleyne humylitee;
No tendre mouth, noon herte delicat,
No pompe, no semblant of roialtee;
But ful of pacient benygnytee,
Discreet and prideles, ay honourable,
And to hire housbonde evere meke & stable.

Men speke of Job, and moost for his hum-
blesse,
As clerkes, whan hem list, konne wel endite,
Namely of men, but as in soothfastnesse,
Though clerkes preise wommen but a lite,
Ther kan no man in humblesse hym acquite
As womman kan, ne kan been half so trewe
As wommen been, but it be falle of newe.

Explicit quinta pars. Sequitur pars sexta.

Was kouth eek, that a newe markysesse
He with hym broghte, in swich pompe and
richesse,
That nevere was ther seyn with mannes eye
So noble array in al West Lombardye.

The markys, which that shoop and knew al
this,
Er that this erl was come, sente his message
for thilke sely povre Grisildis;
And she with humble herte and glad visage,
Nat with no swollen thocht in hire corage,
Cam at his heste, and on hire knees hire
sette,
And reverently and wisely she hym grette.

GRISILDE, quod he, my wyl is outrelly
This mayden that shal wedded been
to me,
Received be tomorwe as roially
As it possible is in myn hous to be.
And eek that every wight in his degree
Have his estat in sittyng and servyse
And heigh plesaunce, as I kan best devyse.



I have no wommen suffisaunt certayn
The chambres for tarraye in ordinaunce
After my lust, and therefore wolde I fayn
That thyn were al swich manere governaunce;
Thou knowest eek of old al my plesaunce;
Thogh thyn array be badde and yvel biseye,
Do thou thy devoir at the leeste weye.

NOT only, lord, that I am glad, quod she,
To doon youre lust, but I desire also
Yow for to serve and plesse in my degree
Withouthen feynting, and shal everemo;
Nenevere, for no wele ne no wo,
Ne shal the goost withinne myn herte stente
To love yow best with al my trewe entente.

And with that word she gan the hous to
dighte,
And tables for to sette and beddes make;
And peyned hire to doon al that she myghte,
Dreyng the chamberes for Goddes sake
To hasten hem, and faste swepe and shake;
And she, the mooste servysable of alle,
Hath every chambre arrayed and his halle.

ABOUTEN undren gan this erl alighte,
That with him broghte thise noble
children tweye,
for which the peple ran to seen the sighte

Of hire array, so richely biseye;
And thanne at erst amonges hem they seye,
That Walter was no fool, thogh that hym leste
To chaunge his wyf, for it was for the beste.

for she is fairer, as they deemen alle,
Than is Grisilde, and moore tendre of age,
And fairer fruyt bitwene hem sholde falle,
And moore plesant, for hire heigh lynage;
Hir brother eek so faire was of visage,
That hem to seen the peple hath caught
plesaunce,
Commendynge now the markys governaunce.

Auctor

STORMY peple! unsad and
evere untrew!
Hy undiscreet and chaungynge
as a vane,
Delitynge evere in rumbul that
is newe,

for lyk the moone ay were ye and wane;
Hy ful of clappyng, deere ynogh a jane;
Youre doom is fals, youre constance yvele
preeveth,
A ful greet fool is he that on yow leeveth!

Thus seyden sadde folk in that citee
Whan that the peple gazed up and down,

for they were glad right for the noveltee
To han a newe lady of hir toun.
Namore of this make I now mencoun;
But to Grisilde agayn wol I me dresse,
And telle hir constance and hir bisynesse.

ALl bisy was Grisilde in everythyng
That to the feeste was apertinent;
Right noght was she abayst of hire
clothyng,
Thogh it were rude and somdeel eek torent.
But with glad cheere to the yate is went,
With oother folk, to greet the markysesse,
And after that dooth forth hire bisynesse.

With so glad chiere his gastes she receyveth,
And konnyngly, everich in his degree,
That no defaute no man aperceyveth;
But ay they wondren what she myghte bee
That in so poure array was for to see,
And koude swich honour and reverence;
And worthily they preisen hire prudence.

In al this meenewhile she ne stente
This mayde and eek hir brother to commende
With al hir herte, in ful benygne entente,
So wel, that no man koude hir pris amende.
But atte laste, when that thise lordes wende
To sitten down to mete, he gan to calle
Grisilde, as she was bisy in his halle.

GRISILDE, quod he, as it were in his pley,
How liketh thee my wyf and hire beautee?
Right wel, quod she, my lord, for, in
good fey,
A fairer saugh I nevere noon than she.
I prey to God yeve hire prosperitee;
And so hope I that he wol to yow sende
Plesance ynogh unto youre lyves ende.

O thyng biseke I yow, and warne also,
That ye ne prikke with no tormentyng
This tendre mayden, as ye han doon mo;
for she is fostred in hire norissyng
Moore tendrely, and, to my supposyng,
She koude nat adversitee endure
As koude a poure fostred creature.

AND when this Walter saugh hire
pacience,
Hir glade chiere and no malice at al,
And he so ofte had doon to hire offence,
And she ay sad and constant as a wal,
Continuyng evere hire innocence overal,
This sturdy markys gan his herte dresse
To rewen upon hire wyfly stedfastnesse.

THIS is ynogh, Grisilde myn, quod he,
Be now namore agast ne yvele apayed;
I have thy feith and thy benygnytee,
As wel as evere womman was, assayed,
In greet estaat, and pourelliche arrayed.
Now knowe I, deere wyf, thy stedfastnesse.
And hire in armes took, and ganne hire kesse.

And she for wonder took of it no keep;
She herde nat what thyng he to hire seyde,
She ferde as she had stert out of a sleep.
Til she out of hire mazednesse abreyde.
Grisilde, quod he, by God that for us deyde,
Thou art my wyf, ne noon oother I have,
Ne nevere hadde, as God my soule save!

This is thy doghter, which thou hast supposed
To be my wyf; that oother feithfully
Shal be myn heir, as I have ay purposed;
Thou bare hym in thy body trewely.
At Boloigne have I kept hem prively;
Taak hem agayn, for now maystow nat seye
That thou hast lorn noon of thy children tweye.

And folk that ootherweys han seyde of me,
I warne hem wel that I have doon this deede
for no malice, ne for no crueltee,
But for tassaye in thee thy wommanheede,
And nat to sleen my children, God forbede!
But for to hepe hem prively and stille,
Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille.

WHAN she this herde, aswowne down she
falleth
for pitous joye, & after hire swownyng
She bothe hire yonge children unto hire calleth,
And in hire armes, pitously wepyng,
Embraceh hem, and tendrely kysyng
ful lyk a mooder, with hire salte teeres.
She batheth bothe hire visage and hire heeres.

WHICH a pitous thyng it was to se
Hir swownyng, and hire humble voys to
heere!
Grauntmercy, lord! that thanke I yow,
quod she,
That ye han saved me my children deere!
Now rekke I nevere to been deed right heere;
Sith I stonde in youre love and in youre grace,
No fors of deeth, ne when my spirit pace!

O tendre, O deere, O yonge children myne!
Your woful mooder wende stedfastly
That cruell houndes or some foul vermyne,
Hadde eten yow; but God, of his mercy,
And youre benygne fader, tendrely
Hath doon yow kept. And in that same stounde
Al sodenly she swapte adoun to grounde.

And in hire swough so sadly holdeth she
Hir children two, when she gan hem tembrace,
That with greet sleighte and greet difficultee
The children from hire arm they goone arace.
O many a teere on many a pitous face
Doun ran of hem that stoden hire bisyde;
Unnethe abouten hire myghte they abyde.

WALTER hire gladeth, and hire sorwe
slaketh;
Sheriseth up, abaysed, from hire traunce,
And every wight hire joye and feeste maketh,
Til she hath caught agayn hire contenance.

Walter hire dooth so feithfully plesauce,
That it was deyntee for to seen the cheere
Syrwixe hem two, now they been met yfeere.

Thise ladyes, when that they hir tyme saye,
Han taken hire, and into chambre gon,
And strepen hire out of hire rude array,
And in a clooth of gold that brighte shoon,
With a coroune of many a riche stoon
Upon hire heed, they into halle hire broghte,
And ther she was honoured as hire oghte.

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,
for every man and womman dooth his myght
This day in murthe and revel to dispende,
Til on the welkne shoon the sterres lyght.
for more solempne in every mannes syght
This feste was, and gretter of costage,
Than was the revel of hire mariage.

AL many a yeer in heigh prosperitee
Liven thise two in concord and in
reste,
And richely his doghter maryed he
Unto a lord, oon of the worthieste
Of al Ytaille; and thanne in pees and

reste
his wyves fader in his court he kepeth,
Til that the soule out of his body crepeth.

His sone succedeth in his heritage
In reste and pees, after his fader day;
And fortunat was eek in mariage;
Al putte he nat his wyf in greet assay.
This world is nat so strong, it is no nay,
As it hath been of olde tymes yore,
And herkneth what this auctour seith therfoore.

This storie is seyde, nat for that wyves sholde
folwen Grisilde as in humylitee,
for it were inportable, though they wolde;
But for that every wight, in his degree,
Sholde be constant in adversitee
As was Grisilde; therefore Petrak writeth
This storie, which with heigh stile he enditeth.

for sith a womman was so pacient
Unto a mortal man, wel moore us oghte
Receyven al in gree that God us sent;
for greet shile is, he preeve that he wroghte.
But he ne tempteth no man that he boghte,
As seith Seint Jame, if ye his pistel rede;
He preeveth folk al day, it is no drede,

And suffreth us, as for oure exercise,
With sharpe scourges of adversitee
ful ofte to be bete in sondry wise;
Nat for to know oure wyl, for certes he,
Er we were born, knew al oure freletee;
And for oure beste is al his governaunce;
Lat us thanne lyve in vertuous suffraunce.

But o word, lordynges, herkneth, er I go:
It were ful hard to fynde now a dayes

In al a toun Grisildis thre or two;
for, if that they were put to swiche assayes,
The gold of hem hath now so badde alayes
With bras, that thogh the coyne be fair at eye
It wolde rather breste atwo than plye.

for which heere, for the Wyves love of Bathe,
Whos lyf and al hire secte God mayntene
In heigh maistrie, and elles were it scathe,
I wol with lusty herte fressh and grene
Seyn yow a song to glade yow, I wene;
And lat us stynte of earnestful matere:
Herkneth my song, that seith in this manere.

GRISILDE is deed, and eek
hire pacience,
And bothe atones buried
in Ytaille;
for which I crie in open
audience,
No wedded man so hardy
be tassaille
His wyves pacience in hope
to fynde
Grisildis, for in certein he shal faille!

O noble wyves, ful of heigh prudence,
Lat noon humylitee youre tonge naille,
Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence
To write of yow a storie of swich mervaille
As of Grisildis pacient and kynde;
Lest Chichevache yow swelwe in hire entraille!

folweth Ekko, that holdeth no silence,
But evere answereth at the countretaille;
Beth nat bidaffed for youre innocence,
But sharply taak on yow the governaille.
Emprenteth wel this lesson in youre mynde
for commune profit, sith it may availle.

Ye archewyves, stondeh at defense,
Syn ye be strong as is a greet camaille,
Ne suffreth nat that men yow doon offense.
And sklendre wyves, fieble as in bataille,
Beth egre as is a tygre yond in Ynde;
Ay clappeth as a mille, I yow consaille.

Ne dreed hem nat, doth hem no reverence;
for thogh thyn housbonde armed be in maille,
The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
Shal perce his brest, and eek his aventaille.
In jalousie I rede eek thou hym bynde,
And thou shalt make hym couche as dooth a
quaille.

If thou be fair, ther folk been in presence
Shewe thou thy visage and thyn apparaille;
If thou be foul, be fre of thy dispence,
To gete thee freendes ay do thy travaille;
Be ay of chiere as light as leef on lynde,
And lat hym care and wepe, and wryng and waille!
Here endith the Clerk of Oxenford his Tale.

The prologe of the Marchantes Tale

AND waylyng, care and oother sorwe I knowe ynogh, on even and a morwe, Quod the Marchant, and so doon othere mo That wedded been, I trowe that it be so; for wel I woot, it fareth so with me.

I have a wyf, the worste that may be; for thogh the feend to hire ycoupled were, She wolde hym overmacche, I dar wel swere. What sholde I yow reherce in special hir hye malice? She is a shrewe at al. Ther is a long and large difference Bitwix Grisildis grete pacience And of my wyf the passyng crueltee. Were I unbounen, al so moot I thee!

I wolde nevere eft comen in the snare, We wedded men lyve in sorwe and care, Assaye whoso wole, and he shal fynde I seye sooth, by Seint Thomas of Ynde, As for the moore part, I sey nat alle; God shilde that it sholde so bifalle! A! good sir hoost! I have ywedded bee Thise monthes two, and moore nat, pardee! And yet, I trowe, he that al his lyve Wyfles bath been, though that men wolde him ryve Unto the herte, ne koude in no manere Tellen so muchel sorwe, as I now heere Koude tellen of my wyves cursednesse! Now, quod our hoost, Marchant, so God yow blesse! Syn ye so muchel knowen of that art, ful hertely I pray yow telle us part. Gladly, quod he, but of myn owene soore, for soory herte, I telle may namoore.

Heere bigynneth the Marchantes Tale

THAT in this world it is a paradys, Thus seyde this olde knyght, that was so wys. And certainly, as sooth as God is kyng, To take a wyf, it is a glorious thyng; And namely whan a man is oold and hoor, Channe is a wyf the fruyt of his tresor. Channe sholde he take a yong wyf and a feir, On which he myghte engendren hym an heir, And lede his lyf in joye and in solas; Wheras thise bacheleres synge Alas! Whan that they fynden any adversitee In love, which nys but chylidyssh vanytee. And trewely it sit wel to be so, That bacheleres have often payne and wo; On brotel ground they buylde, & brotelnesse They fynde, whan they wene sikernesse. They lyve but as a bryd or as a beest, In libertee, and under noon arreest, Theras a wedded man in his estat Lyveth a lyf blisful and ordinaat, Under the yok of mariage ybounde. Wel may his herte in joye & blisse habounde; for who kan be so buxom as a wyf? Who is so trewe, and eek so ententyf To kepe hym, syk and hool, as is his make? for wele or wo she wole hym nat forsake. She nys nat very hym to love and serve, Thogh that he lye bedrede til he sterve.

THER was dwellynge in Lumbardeye A worthy knyght, that born was of Dawaye, In which he lyved in greet prosperitee; And sixty yer a wyfles man was hee, And folwed ay his bodily delyt On wommen, theras was his appetyt, As doon thise foolles that been seculer. And whan that he was passed sixty yer, Were it for hoolynesse or for dotage I kan nat seye, but swich a greet corage Hadde this knyght to been a wedded man, That day and nyght he dooth al that he kan Tespien where he myghte wedded be; Dreyng oure Lord to granten him, that he Mighte ones knowe of thilke blisful lyf That is bitwix an housbonde and his wyf; And for to lyve under that hooly bond With which that first God man and womman bond.

Noon oother lyf, seyde he, is worth a bene; for wedlok is so esy and so clene,

That in this world it is a paradys, Thus seyde this olde knyght, that was so wys. And certainly, as sooth as God is kyng, To take a wyf, it is a glorious thyng; And namely whan a man is oold and hoor, Channe is a wyf the fruyt of his tresor. Channe sholde he take a yong wyf and a feir, On which he myghte engendren hym an heir, And lede his lyf in joye and in solas; Wheras thise bacheleres synge Alas! Whan that they fynden any adversitee In love, which nys but chylidyssh vanytee. And trewely it sit wel to be so, That bacheleres have often payne and wo; On brotel ground they buylde, & brotelnesse They fynde, whan they wene sikernesse. They lyve but as a bryd or as a beest, In libertee, and under noon arreest, Theras a wedded man in his estat Lyveth a lyf blisful and ordinaat, Under the yok of mariage ybounde. Wel may his herte in joye & blisse habounde; for who kan be so buxom as a wyf? Who is so trewe, and eek so ententyf To kepe hym, syk and hool, as is his make? for wele or wo she wole hym nat forsake. She nys nat very hym to love and serve, Thogh that he lye bedrede til he sterve. And yet somme clerkes seyn it nys nat so, Of whiche he, Theofraste, is oon of tho. What force though Theofraste liste lye? Ne take no wyf, quod he, for housbondrye, As for to spare in houshold thy dispence; A trewe servant dooth moore diligence Thy good to kepe, than thyn owene wyf,

for she wol clayme half part al hir lyf; And if that thou be syk, so God me save! Thy verray freendes or a trewe knave Wol kepe thee bet than she that waiteth ay. After thy good, and hath doon many a day. And if thou take a wyf unto thyn hold, Ful lightly maystow been a cokewold. This sentence, and an hundred thynges worse, Writeth this man, ther God his bones corse! But take no kepe of al swich vanytee; Deme Theofraste and herke me. A wyf is Goddes yifte verraily; Alle othere manere yiftes hardily, As londres, rentes, pasture, or commune, Or moebles, alle been yiftes of fortune, That passen as a shadwe upon a wal, But dredelees, if pleyntly speke I shal, A wyf wol laste, and in thyn hous endure, Wel longer than thee list, paraventure.

MARRIAGE is a ful greet sacrament; He which that hath no wyf, I holde hym shent;

He lyveth helples and al desolat, Lapeke of folk in seculer estat. And herke why, I sey nat this for noght, That womman is for mannes help ywrought. The hye God, whan he hadde Adam maked, And saugh him al alone, belynakid, God of his grete goodnesse seyde than, Lat us now make an help unto this man Lyk to hymself; and thanne he made him Eve. Heere may ye se, and heerby may ye preve, That wyf is mannes help and his confort, His Paradys terrestre and his disport; So buxom and so vertuous is she, They moste nedes lyve in unitee. O flesch they been, and o flesch, as I gesse, Hath but oon herte, in wele and in distresse.

Al Seinte Marie, benedicite! How myghte a man han any adversitee That hath a wyf? Certes, I kan nat seye. The blisse which that is bitwix hem tweye Ther may no tonge telle, or herte thynke.

If he be powre, she helpeth hym to swynke; She kepeth his good, and wasteth never a deel; Al that hire housbonde lust, hire liketh weel; She seith not ones, Nay, whan he seith, Ye.

DO this, seith he, Al redy, sire, seith she. BLISFUL ordre of wedlok precious,

Thou art so murye, and eek so vertuous, And so commended and appreveed eek, That every man that halt hym worth a leek Upon his bare knees oughte al his lyf Thanken his God that hym hath sent a wyf; Or elles preye to God hym for to sende A wyf, to laste unto his lyves ende; for thanne his lyf is set in sikernessee; He may nat be deceyved, as I gesse, So that he werke after his wyves reed; Channe may he boldely kepen up his heed, They been so trewe, and therewithal so wyse; for which, if thou wolt werken as the wyse, Do alwey so as wommen wol thee rede.

HO, how that Jacob, as thise clerkes rede, By good conseil of his mooder Rebekke, Boonde the kydes skyn aboute his nekke; Thurgh which his fadres benysoun he wan.

JUDITH, as the storie telle kan, By wys conseil she Goddes peple kepte, And slow hym, Olofermus, whil he slepte.

ABIGAYL, by good conseil how she Saved hir housbonde, Nabal, whan that he Sholde han be slayn; & looke, Ester also By good conseil delyvered out of wo The peple of God, and made hym, Mardochee, Of Assuere enhaunced for to be.

THER nys nothyng in gree superlatyf, As seith Senek, above an humble wyf, Suffre thy wyves tonge, as Catoun bit; She shal comande, and thou shalt suffren it; And yet she wole obeye of curteisye. A wyf is kepere of thyn housbondrye; Wel may the sike man biwaille and wepe, Theras ther nys no wyf the hous to kepe. I warne thee, if wisely thou wolt wirche, Love wel thy wyf, as Crist loveth his chirche. If thou lovest thyself, thou lovest thy wyf, No man hateth his flesch, but in his lyf He fostreth it, and therfore bidde I thee, Cherisse thy wyf, or thou shalt nevere thee. Housbonde and wyf, whatso men jape or pleye, Of worldly folk holden the siker weye; They been so knyght, ther may noon harm bityde; And namely, upon the wyves syde, for which this Januarie, of whom I tolde, Considered hath, inwith his dayes olde, The lusty lyf, the vertuous quyete, That is in mariage hony sweete; And for his freendes on a day he sente, To tellen hem theffect of his entente.

WITH face sad, his tale he hath hem toold: He seyde, freendes, I am hoor and oold, And almoost, God woot, on my pittes brynke;

Upon my soule somewhat moste I thynke, I have my body folity despended; Blessed be God! that it shal been amended! for I wol be, certeyn, a wedded man, And that anon in al the haste I kan, Unto som mayde fair and tendre of age. I prey yow, shapeth for my mariage Al sodeynly, for I wol nat abyde; And I wol fonde tespien, on my syde, To whom I may be wedded hastily. But forasmuche as ye been mo than I, Ye shullen rather swich a thyng espyn Than I, and where me best were to allyen. But o thyng warne I yow, my freendes deere, I wol noon oold wyf han in no manere. She shal nat passe twenty yer, certayn; Oold fish and yong flesch wolde I have ful fayn. Bet is, quod he, a pyk than a pykerel; And bet than old boef is the tendre veel. I wol no womman thrifty yer of age,

The Marchantes Tale

It is but benestraw and greet forage.
And eek this olde wydwes, God it woot,
They konne so muchel craft on Wades boot,
So muchel broken harm, whan that hem leste,
That with hem sholde I nevere lyve in reste;
for sondry scoles maken so tile clerkis;
Womman of manye scoles half a clerk is.
But certeynly, a yong thyng may men gye,
Right as men may warm wex with handes plye.
Wherfore I sey yow pleyntly, in a clause,
I wol noon oold wyf han right for this cause.
For if so were, I hadde swich myschaunce
That I in hire ne koude han no plesaunce,
Thanne sholde I lede my lyf in avoutrye,
And go streight to the devel whan I dye.
Ne children sholde I none upon hire geten;
Yet were me levere boundes had me eten,
Than that myn heritage sholde falle
In straunge hand, and this I telle yow alle.
I dote nat; I woot the cause why
Men sholde wedde, and forthermoore woot I
Ther speketh many a man of mariage,
That woot namoore of it than woot my page,
for whiche causes man sholde take a wyf.
If he ne may nat lyven chaast his lyf,
Take hym a wyf with greet devocioun,
Bycause of leveful procreacioun
Of children, to thonour of God above,
And nat oonly for paramour or love;
And for they sholde leccherye eschue,
And yelde hir dettes whan that they ben due;
Or for that ech of hem sholde helpen oother
In meschief, as a suster shal the brother,
And lyve in chastitee ful holly.
But sires, by youre leve, that am nat I,
for, God be thanked, I dar make avaunt,
I feele my lymes stark and suffisaunt
To do al that a man bilongeth to;
I woot myselven best what I may do.
Though I be hoor, I fare as dooth a tree
That blometh er that fruyt ywoven bee;
And blommy tre nys neither drye ne deed.
I feele me nowher hoor but on myn heed;
Myn herte and alle my lymes been as grene
As laurer thurgh the yeer is for to sene.
And syn that ye han herd al myn entente,
I prey yow to my wyl ye wole assente.

DIVERSE men diversely hym tolde
Of mariage manye ensamples olde.
Somme blamed it, somme preysed it,
certeyn;

But atte laste, shortly for to seyn,
As al day falleth altercacioun
Bitwixen freendes in disputioun,
Ther fil a stryf bitwixe his bretheren two,
Of whiche that oon was cleped Placebo,
Justinus soothly called was that oother.

PLACEBO seyde, O Januarie, brother,
ful litel nede hadde ye, my lord so deere,
Conseil to axe of any that is heere;
But that ye been so ful of sapience,
That yow ne liketh, for youre heighe prudence,
To weyven fro the word of Salomon.

This word seyde he unto us everychon:
Wilk alle thyng by conseil, thus seyde he,
And thanne shaltow nat repente thee.
But though that Salomon spak swich a word,
Myn owene deere brother and my lord,
So wysly God my soule brynge at reste,
I holde youre owene conseil is the beste.
for brother myn, of me taak this motyf,
I have now been a court man al my lyf,
And, God it woot, though I unworthy be,
I have stonden in ful greet degree
Abouten lordes of ful heigh estaat;
Yet hadde I nevere with noon of hem debaat;
I nevere hem contraried, trewely;
I woot wel that my lord kan moore than I.
What that he seith, I holde it ferme and stable;
I seye the same, or elles thyng semblaible.
A ful greet fool is any conseilour,
That serveth any lord of heigh honour,
That dar presume, or elles thenken it,
That his conseil sholde passe his lordes wit.
Nay, lordes been no foolis, by my fay!
Ye han youreselven seyed heer today
So heigh sentence, so holly and weel,
That I consent and conferme everydeel
Your wordes alle, and youre opinioun.
By God, ther nys no man in al this toun,
Nyn al Ytaille, that koude bet han sayd,
Crist halt hym of this conseil wel apayd.
And trewely it is an heigh corage
Of any man that stapen is in age
To take a yong wyf; by my fader kyn,
Your herte hangeth on a joly pyn!
Dooth now in this matiere right as yow leste,
for, finally, I holde it for the beste.

JUSTINUS, that ay stille sat and herde,
Right in this wise to Placebo answerde:

Now, brother myn, be pacient, I prey,
Syn ye han seyde, and herkneth what I seye.
Senek among his othere wordes wyse
Seith that a man oghte hym right wel avyse
To whom he yeveth his lond or his catel;
And syn I oghte avyse me right wel
To whom I yeve my good away fro me,
Wel muchel moore I oghte avysed be
To whom I yeve my body for alwey.
I warne yow wel, it is no childes pley
To take a wyf withoute avysement.
Men moste enquire, this is myn assent,
Wher she be wys, or sobre, or dronkelewe,
Or proud, or elles ootherweys a shrew,
A chidester, or wastour of thy good,
Or riche, or poore, or elles mannysch wood.
Albeit so that no man fynden shal
Noon in this world that trotteth hool in al,
Ne man ne beest, which as men koude devyse;
But nathelees, it oghte ynough suffise
With any wyf, if so were that she hadde
Mo goode thewes than hire vices badde.
And al this axeth leyser for tenquere;
for, God it woot, I have wept many a teere
ful prively, syn I have had a wyf.
Preyse whoso wole a wedded mannes lyf,

Certain, I fynde in it but cost and care,
And observances, of alle blisses bare.
And yet, God woot, my neighebores aboute,
And namely of wommen many a route,
Seyn that I have the mooste stedefast wyf,
And eek the mekeste oon that bereth lyf;
But I woot best where wryngeth me my sho.
Ye mowe, for me, right as yow liketh do;
I wyseth yow, ye been a man of age,
How that ye entren into mariage,
And namely with a yong wyf and a fair.
By hym that made water, erthe, and air,
The yongest man that is in al this route
Is biay ynough to bryngen it aboute
To han his wyf allone, trusteth me.
Ye shul nat plesen hire fully yeres thre,
This is to seyn, to doon hire ful plesaunce.
A wyf axeth ful many an observance.
I prey yow that ye be nat yuele apayd.

EL, quod this Januarie, & hastow
sayd?
Straw for thy Senek, and for thy
proverbes!
I counte nat a panyer ful of herbes
Of scoles termes; wyser men than

thow.
As thou hast herd, assenteden right now
To my purpos; Placebo, what sey ye?
I seye, it is a cursed man, quod he,
That letteth matrimoine, sikerly.
And with that word they rysen sodeynly,
And been assented fully, that he sholde
Be wedded whanne hym list and wher he wolde.

Fro day to day gan in the soule impresse
Of Januarie aboute his mariage.
Many fair shap, and many a fair visage
Ther passeth thurgh his herte, nyght by nyght.
As whoso toke a mirour polissed bryght,
And sette it in a commune market place,
Thanne sholde he se ful many a figure pace
By his mirour; and, in the same wyse
Gan Januarie inwith his thoght devyse
Of maydens, whiche that dwelten hym bisyde.
He wiste nat wher that he myghte abyde,
for if that oon have beaute in hir face,
Another stant so in the peples grace
for hire sadnesse, and hire benyngnytee,
That of the peple grettest voys hath she.
And somme were riche, and hadden badde name.
But nathelees, bitwixe earnest and game,
He atte laste apoynted hym on oon,
And leet alle othere from his herte goon,
And chees hire of his owene auctoritee;
for love is blynd al day, and may nat see.
And whan that he was in his bed ybrought,
He purtreied, in his herte and in his thoght,
Hir fresshe beautee and hir age tendre,
Hir myddel smal, hire armes longe and skilendre,
Hir wise governaunce, hir gentillesse,
Hir wommanly berynge and hire sadnesse.
And whan that he on hire was condescended,
Hym thoughte his choys myghte nat ben amended.

for whan that he hymself concluded hadde,
Hym thoughte ech oother mannes wit so badde,
That impossible it were to replye
Agayn his choys; this was his fantasye.

HIS freendes sente he to, at his instaunce,
And preyed hem to doon hym that plesaunce,
That hastily they wolden to hym come;
He wolde abregge hir labour, alle and some;
Nedeth namoore for hym to go ne ryde,
He was apoynted ther he wolde abyde.

PLACEBO cam, & eek his freendes soone,
And alderfirst he bad hem alle a boone,
That noon of hem none argumentes make
Agayn the purpos which that he hath take;
Which purpos was plesant to God, seyde he,
And verray ground of his prosperitee.

E seyde, ther was a mayden in the toun,
Which that of beautee hadde greet renoun,
Al were it so she were of smal degree;
Suffiseth hym hir yowthe and hir beautee.
Which mayde, he seyde, he wolde han to his wyf,
To lede in ese and hoolynesse his lyf.
And thanked God that he myghte han hire al,
That no wight of his blisse parten shal;
And preyde hem to labouren in this nede,
And shapen that he faille nat to spede;
for thanne, he seyde, his spirit was at ese.
Thanne is, quod he, nothyng may me displese,
Save o thyng prieth in my conscience,
The which I wol reherce in youre presence.

HAVE, quod he, herd seyde, ful yore ago,
Ther may no man han parfitte blisses two,
This is to seye, in erthe and eek in hevene.
for though he kepe hym fro the synnes sevene,
And eek from every branche of thilke tree,
Yet is ther so parfit felicitye,

And so greet ese and lust in mariage,
That evere I am agast now in myn age,
That I shal lede now so myrie a lyf,
So delicat, withouten wo and stryf,
That I shal have myn hevene in erthe heere.
for sith that verray hevene is boght so deere
With tribulacioun and greet penaunce,
How sholde I thanne, that lyve in swich plesaunce,
As alle wedded men doon with hire wyvys,
Come to the blisse ther Crist eterne on lyve ys?
This is my drede, and ye, my bretheren tweye,
Assoilleth me this questioun, I prey.

JUSTINUS, which that hated his folye,
Answerde anon, right in his japerye:
And for he wolde his longe tale abregge,
He wolde noon auctoritee allegge,
But seyde, Sire, so ther be noon obstacle
Oother than this, God of his hygh myracle,
And of his mercy, may so for yow wirche,
That, er ye have youre right of hooly chirche,
Ye may repente of wedded mannes lyf,
In which ye seyn ther is no wo ne stryf.
And elles, God forbode but he sente
A wedded man hym grace to repente
Wel ofte rather than a sengle man.
And therfore, sire, the beste reed I kan,
Dispeire yow noght, but have in youre memorie,

Paraunter she may be youre purgatorie!
She may be Goddes meene, and Goddes whippel!
Channe shal youre soule up to hevne skippe
Swifter than dooth an arwe out of the bowel!
I hope to God, herafter shul ye knowe
That ther nys no so greet felicitye
In mariage, ne nevere mo shal bee,
That yow shal lette of youre savacioun,
So that ye use, as skile is and resoun,
The lustes of youre wyf attemprely,
And that ye plesse hire nat to amorously,
And that ye kepe yow eek from oother synne.
My tale is doon: for that my witte is thynne.
Beth nat agast herof, my brother deere.
But lat us waden out of this mateere.
The Wyf of Bathe, if ye han understonde,
Of mariage, which ye have on honde,
Declared hath ful wel in litel space.

fareth now wel, God have yow in his grace.
AND with this word this Justyn & his brother
Han take hir leve, and ech of hem of oother.
For whan they saugh that it moste nedes be,
They wroghten so, by sly and wys trectee,
That she, this mayden, which that Mayus highte,
As hastily as evere that she myghte,
Shal wedded be unto this Januarie.
I trowe it were to longe yow to tarie,
If I yow tolde of every scrit and bond,
By which that she was fefed in his lond;
Or for to herkennen of hir riche array.
But finally ycomen is the day
That to the chirche bothe be they went
for to receyve the hooly sacrament.
forth comth the preest, with stole aboute his
nekke,
And bad hire be lyk Sarra and Rebekke
In wysdom and in trouthe of mariage;
And seyde his orisons as is usage,
And croucheth hem, and bad God sholde hem
blesse,

And made al siker ynogh with hoolynesse.
THUS been they wedded with
solempnitee,
And at the feeste sitteth he and she,
With oother worthy folk, upon the
deys.

Al ful of joye & blisse is the paleys,
And ful of instruments, and of vitaille,
The mooste deynteuous of al Ytaille.
Biforn hem stode swich instruments of soun,
That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphion,
Ne maden nevere swich a melodye.
At every cours thanne cam loud mynstralcy
That nevere tromped Joab, for to heere,
Nor he, Theodomas, yet half so cleere,
At Thebes, whan the citee was in doute.
Bacus the wyn hem skynketh al aboute,
And Venus laugheth upon every wight.
For Januarie was bicomme hir knyght,
And wolde bothe assayen his corage
In libertee, and eek in mariage.
And with hire fyrbrond in hire hand aboute
Daunceth biforn the bryde and al the route.

And certainly, I dar right wel seyn this,
Ymeneus, that god of weddyng is,
Saugh nevere his lyf so myrie a wedded man.
I OOL D thou thy pees, thou poete Marcan,
That writest us that ilke weddyng murie
Of hire, Philologie, and hym, Mercurie,
And of the songes that the Muses songe.
To smal is bothe thy penne, and eek thy tonge,
for to descryven of this mariage.
Whan tendre youthe hath wedded stoupyng age,
Ther is swich myrthe that it may nat be writen.
Assayeth it yourself, thanne may ye witen
If that I lye or noon in this matiere.

QUENE Ester looked nevere with swich an
eye

On Assuer, so meke a look hath she.
I may yow nat devyse al hir beautee;
But thus muche of hire beautee telle I may,
That she was lyk the brighte mornynge of May,
fulfid of alle beautee and plesaunce.

THIS Januarie is ravysshed in a trauce
At every tyme he looked on hir face;
But in his herte he gan hire to manace,
That he that nyght in armes wolde hire streyne
Harder than evere Parys dide Eleyne.
But natheles, yet hadde he greet pitee,
That thilke nyght offenden hire moste he;
And thoughte, Alas! O tendre creature!
Now wolde God ye myghte wel endure
Al my corage, it is so sharp and keene;
I am agast ye shul it nat sustene.

But God forbode that I dide al my myght!
Now wolde God that it were woxen nyght,
And that the nyght wolde lasten everemo.
I wolde that al this peple were ago!
And finally, he dooth al his labour,
As he best myghte, savynge his honour,
To haste hem fro the mete in subtil wyse.

THIS tyme cam that resoun was to ryse;
And after that, men daunce & drynken faste,
And spices al aboute the hous they caste;
And ful of joye and blisse is every man;
Al but a squyer, highte Damyan,
Which carf biforn the knyght ful many a day.
He was so ravysshed on his lady May,
That for the verray payne he was ny wood:
Almoost he swelte and swooned ther he stood.
So soore hath Venus hurt hym with hire brond,
As that she bar it daunsynge in hire hond;
And to his bed he wente hym hastily.
Namore of hym as at this tyme speke I;
But there I lete hym wepe ynogh and pleyne,
Til fresshe May wol rewen on his payne.

PERILOUS fyr, that in the bed-
straw bredeth!
O famulier foo, that his servyce
bedeth!
O servant traytour, false hoomly
hewe,

Lyk to the naddre in bosom, sly, untrew,
God shilde us alle from youre aqueyntaunce!

O Januarie, dronken in plesaunce
Of mariage, se how thy Damyan,
Thyn owene squier and thy borne man,
Entendeth for to do thee vileynye.
God graunte thee thyn hoomly fo trespere;
for in this world nys worse pestilence
Than hoomly foo al day in thy presence.

ARFOURNED hath the sonne his
ark diurne,
No lenger may the body of hym
sojurne
On thorisonte, as in that latitude.
Night with his mantel, that is derk

and rude,
Can oversprede the hemysperie aboute;
for which departed is this lusty route
fro Januarie, with thank on every syde.
Hoom to hir houses lustily they ryde,
Wheras they doon hir thynges as hem leste,
And whan they sye hir tyme, goon to reste.

DONE after that, this hastif Januarie
Wolde go to bedde, he wolde no lenger tarye.
He drynketh ypcoras, claree, and vernage
Of spices hoot, tencresen his corage;
And many a letuarie hath he ful fyn,
Swiche as the cursed monk, Daun Constantyn,
Hath writen in his book, De Coitu;
To eten hem alle, he nas nothing eschu.

And to his priverie freendes thus seyde he:
For Goddes love, as soone as it may be,
Lat voyden al this hous in curteys wyse.

And they han doon right as he wol devyse.
Men drynken, and the travers drawe anon;
The bryde was broght abedde as stille as stoon;
And whan the bed was with the preest yblessed,
Out of the chambre hath every wight hym dressed.
And Januarie hath faste in armes take
his fresshe May, his paradys, his make.

He lullet hire, he kisset hire ful ofte
With thikke brustles of his berd unsofte,
Lyk to the skyn of houndfyssh, sharpe as brere;
for he was shawe al newe in his manere.
He rubbeth hire aboute hir tendre face
And seyde thus, Alas! I moot trespere
To yow, my spouse, and yow greetly offende,
Er tyme come that I wil down descende.

But natheles, considereth this, quod he,
Ther nys no werkman, whatsovere he be,
That may bothe werke wel and hastily;
This wol be doon at leyser parfitly.
It is no fors how longe that we pleye;
In trewe wedlok wedded be we tweye;
And blessed be the yok that we been inne,
for in oure actes we mowe do no synne.

A man may do no synne with his wyf,
Ne hurte hymselfen with his owene knyf;
for we han leve to pleye us by the lawe.
THUS laboureth he til that the day gan dawne;
And thanne he taketh a sop in fyne claree,
And upright in his bed thanne sitteth he;
And after that he sang ful loude and cleere,
And kiste his wyf, and made wantowne cheere.
He was al coltish, ful of ragerye,

And ful of jargon as a flekked pye.
The slakke skyn aboute his nekke shaketh
Whil that he sang; so chaunteth he and craketh.
But God woot what that May thoughte in hire
herte,

Whan she hym saugh up sittynge in his sherte,
In his nyght cappe, and with his nekke lene;
She preyseth nat his pleyng worth a bene.

THANNE seide he thus, My reste wol I take;
Now day is come, I may no lenger wake.
And down he leyde his heed, and sleep til
pryme.

And afterward, whan that he saugh his tyme,
Up ryseth Januarie; but fresshe May
Holdeth hire chambre unto the fourthe day,
As usage is of wyves for the beste;
for every labour som tyme moot han reste,
Or elles longe may he nat endure;
This is to seyn, no lyes creature,
Be it of fyssh, or bryd, or beest, or man.

WOL I speke of woful Damyan,
That langwisseth for love, as ye shul heere;
Therefore I speke to hym in this manere:

I seye, O sely Damyan, alas!
Answer to my demaunde, as in this cas,
How shaltow to thy lady, fresshe May,
Telle thy wo? She wole alway seye Nay.
Eek if thou speke, she wol thy wo biweye;
God be thyn help, I kan no bettre seye.

This sike Damyan in Venus fyr
So brenneth, that he dyeth for desyr;
for which he putte his lyf in aventure,
No lenger myghte he in this wise endure;
But prively a penner gan he borwe,
And in a lettre wroot he al his sorwe,
In manere of a compleynt or a lay,
Unto his faire fresshe lady May;

And in a purs of silk, heng on his sherte,
He hath it put, and leyde it at his herte.
The moone that, at noon, was, thilke day
That Januarie hath wedded fresshe May,
In two of Tawr, was into Cancre glyden,
So longe hath Mayus in hir chambre byden,
As custome is unto thise nobles alle.

A bryde shal nat eten in the halle,
Til dayes foure or thre dayes atte leeste
Ypassed been; thanne lat hire go to feeste.
The fourthe day compleet fro noon to noon,
Whan that the heighe masse was ydoon,
In halle sit this Januarie, and May
As fresshe as is the brighte someres day.

And so bifel, how that this goode man
Remembred hym upon this Damyan,
And seyde, Seynte Marie! how may this be,
That Damyan entendeth nat to me?

Is he ay syk? or how may this bityde?
His squieres, whiche that stoden ther bisyde,
Excused hym bycause of his siknesse,
Which letted hym to doon his bisynesse;
Noon oother cause myghte make hym tarye.

HAT me forthynketh, quod this Januarie,
He is a gentil squier, by my trouthe!
If that he deyde, it were harm and routhe;

He is as wys, discreet, and as secree
As any man I woot of his degree;
And therto manly and eek servysable,
And for to been a thrifty man right able.
But after mete, as soone as evere I may,
I wol myself visite hym, and eek May,
To doon hym al the confort that I kan.
And for that word hym blessed every man,
That, of his bountee and his gentillesse,
He wolde so conforten in siknesse
His squier, for it was a gentil dede.
¶ Dame, quod this Januarie, taak good hede,
At after mete, ye with youre wommen alle,
Whan ye han been in chambre out of this halle,
That alle ye go se this Damyan.
Dooth hym disport, he is a gentil man;
And telleth hym that I wol hym visite,
Have I nothyng but rested me a lite;
And spede yow faste, for I wole abyde
Til that ye slepe faste by my syde.
¶ And with that word he gan to hym to calle
A squier, that was marchal of his halle,
And tolde hym certeyn thynges, what he wolde.
¶ His fresshe May hath streight hir wey
Yholde,
With alle hir wommen, unto Damyan.
Doun by his beddes syde sit she than,
Confortyng hym as goodly as she may.
This Damyan, whan that his tyme he say,
In secree wise his purs, and eek his bille,
In which that he ywriten hadde his wille,
Hath put into hire hand, withouten moore,
Save that he siketh wonder depe and soore,
And softly to hire right thus seyde he:
Mercy! and that ye nat discovere me,
For I am deed, if that this thyng be kyd.
¶ This purs hath she inwith hir bosom hyd,
And wente hire wey; ye gete namoore of me.
But unto Januarie ycomen is she,
That on his beddes syde sit ful softe.
He taketh hire, and kisseth hire ful ofte,
And leyde hym down to slepe, and that anon.
She feyned hire as that she moste gon
Theras ye woot that every wight moot neede;
And whan she of this bille hath taken heede,
She rente it al to cloutes atte laste,
And in the pryvee softlyt it caste.
¶ No studieth now but faire fresshe May?
Adoun by olde Januarie she lay,
That sleep, til that the coughe hath hym
Awaked.
Anon he preyde hire strepen hire al naked;
He wolde of hire, he seyde, han som plesaunce,
And seyde, hir clothes dide hym encombraunce,
And she obeyeth, be hire lief or looth.
But, lest that precious folk be with me wrooth,
How that he wroghte, I dar nat to yow telle;
Or whether hire thoughte it paradys or helle;
But heere I lete hem werken in hir wyse
Til evensong rong, and that they moste aryse.
¶ Were it by destynce or aventure,
Were it by influence or by nature,
Or constellation, that in swich estaat

The hevene stood, that tyme fortunat
Was for to putte a bille of Venus werkes,
For alle thyng hath tyme, as seyn thise clerkes,
To any womman, for to gete hire love,
I kan nat seye; but grete God above,
That knoweth that noon act is causelees,
He deme of al, for I wole holde my pees.
But sooth is this, how that this fresshe May
Hath take swich impression that day,
For pitee of this sike Damyan,
That from hire herte she ne dryve kan
The remembrance for to doon hym ese.
¶ Certeyn, thoughte she, whom that this thyng
displese,
I rekke noght, for heere I hym assure,
To love hym best of any creature,
Though he namoore hadde than his sherte.
¶ Lo, pitee renneth soone in gentil herte.
¶ HERE may ye se how excellent
franchise
In wommen is, whan they hem narre
avyse.
Som tyrant is, as ther be many oon,
That hath an herte as hard as any
stoon,
Which wolde han lat hym sterven in the place
Wel rather than han graunted hym hire grace;
And hem rejoycen in hire cruel pryde,
And rekke nat to been an homycide.
¶ This gentil May, fulfilled of pitee,
Right of hire hand a lettre made she,
In which she graunteth hym hire verray grace;
Ther lakketh noght onely but day and place
Wher that she myghte unto his lust suffise;
For it shal be right as he wole devyse.
And whan she saugh hir tyme, upon a day,
To visite this Damyan gooth May,
And sotilly this lettre doun she threste
Under his pilwe, rede it if hym leste.
She taketh hym by the hand, and harde hym
twiste
So secretly, that no wight of it wiste,
And bad hym been al hool; and forth she wente
To Januarie, whan that he for hire sente.
¶ O riseth Damyan the nexte morwe;
Al passed was his siknesse and his sorwe.
He kembeth hym, he proyneth hym and
pyketh,
He dooth al that his lady lust and lyketh;
And eek to Januarie he gooth as lowe
As evere dide a dogge for the bowe.
He is so plesant unto every man,
For craft is al, whoso that do it kan,
That every wight is fayne to speke hym good;
And fully in his lady grace he stood.
Thus lete I Damyan aboute his nede,
And in my tale forth I wol procede.
¶ SOMME clerkes holden that felicitee
Stant in delit, and therefore certeyn he,
This noble Januarie, with al his myght,
In honeste wyse, as longeth to a knyght,
Shoop hym to lyve ful deliciously.
His housyng, his array, as honestly

To his degree was maked, as a kynges.
Amonges othere of his honeste thynges
He made a gardyn, walled al with stoon;
So fair a gardyn woot I nowher noon.
For out of doute, I verrailly suppose
That he that wroote the Romance of the Rose
That he that wroote the Romance wel devyse;
Ne koude of it the beautee wel devyse;
Ne Priapus ne myghte nat suffise,
Though he be god of gardyns, for to telle
The beautee of the gardyn and the welle,
That stood under a laurer alwey grene.
Ful ofte tyme he, Pluto, and his queene,
Proserpina, and al hire faierye,
Disporten hem and maken melodye
Aboute that welle, and daunced, as men tolde.
¶ This noble knyght, this Januarie the olde,
Swich deyntee hath in it to walke and pleye,
That he wol no wight suffren bere the keye
Save he hymself; for of the smale wyket
He baar alwey of silver a smal clyket,
With which, whan that hym leste, he it unshette.
And whan he wolde paye his wyf hir dette
In somer sesoun, thider wolde he go,
And May his wyf, and no wight but they two;
And thynges whiche that were nat doon abedde,
He in the gardyn parfourned hem and spedde.
And in this wyse, many a murye day,
Lived this Januarie and fresshe May.
But worldly joye may nat alwey dure
To Januarie, ne to no creature.
¶ SODEYN hap! O thou fortune
instable!
Lyk to the scorpioun so deceyvable
That flaterest with thyn heed whan
thou wolt styng;
Thy tayl is deeth, thurgh thyn en-
venymyng.
O brotil joye! O sweete venym queynte!
O monstre, that so subtilly kanst peynte
Thy yiftes, under hewe of stidefastnesse,
That thou deceyvest bothe moore and lesse!
Why hastow Januarie thus deceyved,
That haddest hym for thy ful freend receyved?
And now thou hast biraft hym bothe his eyen,
For sorwe of which desirith he to dyen.
¶ Allas! this noble Januarie free,
Amydde his lust and his prosperitee,
Is woxen blynd, and that al sodeynly!
He wepeth and he wayleth pitously;
And therewithal the fyr of jalousye,
Lest that his wyf sholde falle in som folye,
So brente his herte, that he wolde fayn
That som man bothe hym and hire had slayn;
For neither after his deeth, nor in his lyf,
Ne wolde he that she were love ne wyf,
But evere lyve as wydwe in clothes blake,
Soul as the turtle that lost hath hire make.
¶ Atte laste, after a monthe or tweye,
His sorwe gan aswage, sooth to seye;
For whan he wiste it may noon oother be,
He patiently took his adversitee;
Save, out of doute, he may nat forgooon
That he nas jalous everemoore in oon.

Which jalousye it was so outrageous,
That neither in halle, nyn noon oother hous,
Ne in noon oother place, neverthemo,
He nolde suffre hire for to ryde or go,
But if that he had hond on hire alway;
For which ful ofte wepeth fresshe May,
That loveth Damyan so benygne,
That she moot outhir dyen sodeynly,
Or elles she moot han hym as hir leste;
She wayteth whan hir herte wolde breste.
¶ DON that oother syde Damyan
Bicomen is the sorwefulleste man
That evere was; for neither nyght ne day
Ne myghte he speke a word to fresshe May,
As to his purpos, of no swich mateere,
But if that Januarie moste it heere,
That hadde an hand upon hire evermo.
But natheless, by writyng to and fro
And pryvee signes, wiste he what she mente;
And she knew eek the fyn of his entente.
¶ JANUARIE! what myghte it thee
availle,
Thou myghtest se as fer as shippes
saille?
For also good is blynd deceyved be,
As be deceyved whan a man may se.
¶ Lo, Argus, which that hadde an hondred eyen,
For al that evere he koude poure or pryen,
Yet was he blent; and, God woot, so been mo,
That wenen wisly that it be nat so.
Dasse over is an ese, I sey namoore.
¶ This fresshe May, that I spak of so yore,
In warm wax hath emprented the clyket
That Januarie bar of the smale wyket,
By which into his gardyn ofte he wente.
And Damyan, that knew al hire entente,
The clyket countrefeted pryvely;
Ther nys namoore to seye; but hastily
Som wonder by this clyket shal bityde,
Which ye shul heeren, if ye wole abyde.
¶ NOBLE Ovyde! ful sooth seystou,
God woot!
What sleighte is it, though it be long
and hoot,
That he nyl fynde it out in som
manere?
By Piramus and Tesbee may men leere;
Thogh they were kept ful longe streite overal,
They been accorded, rownyng thurgh a wal,
Ther no wight koude han founde out swich a
sleighte.
¶ AT now to purpos: er that dayes eighte
Were passed, er the monthe of Juyll, bifille
That Januarie hath caught so greet a wille,
Thurgh eggyn of his wyf, hym for to pleye
In his gardyn, and no wight but they tweye,
That in a morwe unto this May seith he:
Rys up, my wyf, my love, my lady free;
The turtles voys is herd, my dowve sweete;
The wynter is goon, with alle his reynes weete;
Com forth now, with thyne eyen columbyn!
How fairer been thy brestes than is wyn!
The gardyn is enclosed al aboute;

Com forth, my white spouse! for out of doute,
Thou hast me wounded in myn herte, O wyf!
No spot of thee ne knew I at my lyf;
Come forth, and lat us taken som disport;
I chees thee for my wyf and my confort!
Swiche olde lewed wordes used he.

ON Damyan a signe made she,
That he sholde go biforen with his cliket:
This Damyan thanne hath opened the
wyket,
And in he sturte, and that in swich manere,
That no wight myght it se neither yhere;
And stille he sit under a bussh anon.

THIS Januarie, as blynd as is a stoon,
With Mayus in his hand, and no wight mo,
Into his fresshe gardyn is ago,
And clapte to the wyket sodeynly.

Now, wyf, quod he, heere nys but thou and I,
That art the creature that I best love;
for, by that Lord that sit in hevene above,
Levere ich hadde to dyen on a knyff,
Than thee offende, trewe deere wyf.

for Goddes sake, thank how I thee chees,
Noght for no covetise, doutelees,
But only for the love I had to thee.

And though that I be cold, and may nat see,
Beth to me trewe, and I shal telle yow why.

Thre thynges, certes, shul ye wyne therby;
first, love of Crist, and to yourself honour,
And al myn heritage, toun and tour;

I yewe it yow, maketh chartres as yow leste;
This shal be doon tomorwe er sonne reste.

So wistly God my soule brynge in blisse,
I prey yow first, in covenant ye me kisse.

And though that I be jealous, wyte me noght.
Ye been so depe enprinted in my thought,
That, whan that I considere youre beautee,

And therewithal the unlikely elde of me,
I may nat, certes, though I sholde dye,
forbere to been out of youre compaignye
for verray love; this is withouten doute.

Now kys me, wyf, and lat us come aboute.
THIS fresshe May, whan she thise wordes
herde,

Benyngnely to Januarie answerde;
But first and forward, she bigan to wepe:
I have, quod she, a soule for to kepe

As wel as ye, and also myn honour,
And of my wyfhod thilke tendre flour,
Which that I have assured in your hond

Whan that the preest to yow my body bond;
Wherfore I wole answer in this manere,
By the leve of yow, my lord so deere;

I prey to God that nevere dawe the day
That I ne sterve, as foule as womman may,
If evere I do unto my kyn that shame,

Or elles I empeyre so my name,
That I be fals; and if I do that lakke,
Do strepe me and put me in a sakke,
And in the nexte ryver do me drenche.

I am a gentil womman and no wenche!
Why speke ye thus? But men been evere untrew,
And wommen have repreve of yow ay newe.

Ye han noon oother contenance, I leeve,
But speke to us of untrust and repreve.

And with that word she saugh wher Damyan
Sat in the bussh, and coughen she bigan,
And with hir fynger signes made she

That Damyan sholde clymbe upon a tree,
That charged was with fruyt, and up he wente;
for verrailly he knew al hire entente

And every signe that she koude make
Wel bet than Januarie, hir owene make.
for in a lettre she hadde toold hym al

Of this matere, how he werchen shal.
And thus I lete hym sitte upon the pyrie,
And Januarie and May romynge myrie.

RIGHT was the day, and blew the
firmament,
Phebus of gold his strems doun
hath sent

To gladen every flour with his warm
nesse.
He was that tyme in Geminis, as I gesse,
But litel fro his declynacioun

Of Cancer, Jovis exaltacioun.
And so bifel, that brighte morwe/tyde,
That in that gardyn, in the ferther syde,

Pluto, that is the kyng of faierye,
And many a lady in his compaignye,
folwynge his wyf, the queene Proserpyne,

Ech after oother, right as ony lynce,
Whil that she gadered floures in the mede,
In Claudyan ye may the stories rede,

How in his grisely carte he hire fette.
This kyng of faierye thanne adoun hym sette
Upon a bench of turves, fressh and grene,

And right anon thus seyde he to his queene:
My wyf, quod he, ther may no wight sey nay,
Thexperiens so preveth every day

The tresons whiche that wommen doon to man.
Ten hondred thousand stories tellen I kan
Notable of youre untrouthe and brotilnesse.

O Salomon, wys, and richest of richesse,
fulfild of sapience and of worldly glorie,
ful worthy been thy wordes to memorie

To every wight that wit and reson kan.
Thus preiseth he yet the bountee of man:
Amonges a thousand men yet foond I con,

But of wommen alle foond I noon.
THIS seith the kyng that knoweth youre
wikkednesse,

And Jhesus filiis Syrak, as I gesse,
Ne speke of yow but seelde reverence.
A wyld fyr and corrupt pestilence

So falle upon youre bodies yet tonyght!
Ne se ye nat this honorable knyght?
Bycause, allas! that he is blynd and old,

His owene man shal make hym cokewold.
Lo, heere he sit, the lechour, in the tree!
Now wol I graunten, of my magestee,

Unto this olde, blynde, worthy knyght,
That he shal have ayeyn his eyen syght,
Whan that his wyf wold doon hym vileynye;

Thanne shal he known al hire harlotrye
Bothe in repreve of hire and othere mo.

Ye shal? quod Proserpyne; wol ye so?
Now by my moodres sires soule I swere,
That I shal yeven hire sufficient answer,

And alle wommen after, for hir sake;
That, though they be in any gilt ytake,
With face boold they shulle hemself excuse,

And bere hem doun that wolden hem accuse;
for lakke of answer, noon of hem shal dyen.
Al hadde man seyn a thyng with bothe his eyen,

Yit shul we wommen visage it hardily,
And wepe, and swere, and chide subtilly,
So that ye men shul been as lewed as gees.

What reketh me of youre auctoritees?
I woot wel that this Jew, this Salomon,
foond of us wommen fooler many oon.

But though that he ne foond no good womman,
Yet hath ther founde many another man
Wommen ful trewe, ful goode, and vertuus.

Witness on hem that dwelle in Cristes hous;
With martindom they preved hire constance.
The Romayn Geestes maken remembrance

Of many a verray trewe wyf also.
Of many a verray trewe wyf also.
But, sire, ne be nat wrooth, albeit so,

Though that he seyde he foond no good womman,
I prey yow take the sentence of the man;
He mente thus, that in sovereyn bontee

Nis noon but God, that sit in Trinitee,
Eyl for verray God, that nys but oon,
What make ye so muche of Salomon?

What though he made a temple, Goddes hous?
What though he were riche and glorious?
So made he eek a temple of false goddis,

how myghte he do a thyng that moore forbode is?
Pardee! as faire as ye his name emplastre,
he was a lechour and an ydolastre,

And in his elde he verray God forsook.
And if that God ne hadde, as seith the book,
Ypared hym for his fadres sake, he sholde

Have lost his regne rather than he wolde.
I sette right noght of al the vileynye
That ye of wommen write, a boterflye!

I am a womman, nedes moot I speke,
Or elles swelle til myn herte breke.
for sithen he seyde that we been jangleresses,

As evere hool I moot brouke my tresses,
I shal nat spare, for no curteisye,
To speke hym harm that wolde us vileynye!

AME, quod this Pluto, beno lenger wrooth;
I yewe it up! but sith I swoor myn ooth
That I wolde graunten hym his sighte ageyn,

My word shal stonde, I warne yow, certeyn.
I am a kyng, it sit me noght to lye!
And I, quod she, a queene of faierye!

Hir answer shal she have, I undertake;
Lat us namoore wordes heerof make.
forsothe, I wol no lenger yow contrarie.

Ollat us turne agayn to Januarie,
That in the gardyn with his faire May
Syngeth, ful murier than the papejay:

Yow love I best, and shal, and oother
noon.
So longe aboute the aleyes is he
goon,

Til he was come agaynes thilke pyrie
Wheras this Damyan sitteth ful myrie
An heigh, among the fresshe leves grene.

This fresshe May, that is so bright and sheene,
Gan for to syke, and seyde, Allas, my syde!
Now sire, quod she, for aught that may bityde,

I moste han of the peres that I see,
Or I moot dye, so soore longeth me
To eten of the smale peres grene.

Help, for hir love that is of hevene queene!
I telle yow wel, a womman in my plit
May han to fruyt so greet an appetit,

That she may dyen, but she of it have.
Allas! quod he, that I ne had heer a knave
That koude clymbe; Allas! allas! quod he,

That I am blynd. **Y**e, sire, no fors, quod she:
But wolde ye vouchesauf, for Goddes sake,
The pyrie inwith youre armes for to take,

for wel I woot that ye mystruste me,
Thanne sholde I clymbe wel ynogh, quod she,
So I my foot myghte sette upon youre bak.

Certes, quod he, theron shal be no lak,
Mighte I yow helpen with myn herte blood!
He stoupeth doun, and on his bak she stood,

And caughte hire by a twiste, and up she gooth.
Ladies, I prey yow that ye be nat wrooth;
I kan nat glose, I am a rude man.

And sodeynly anon this Damyan
Gan pullen up the smok, and in he throng.
And whan that Pluto saugh this grete wrong,

To Januarie he yaf agayn his sighte,
And made hym se as wel as evere he myghte.
And whan that he hadde caught his sighte agayn,

Ne was ther nevere man of thyng so fayn.
But on his wyf his thought was everemo;
Up to the tree he caste his eyen two,

And saugh that Damyan his wyf had dressed
In swich manere, it may nat been expressed
But if I wolde speke uncurteisly.

And up he yaf a roryng and a cry,
As dooth the mooder whan the child shal dye:
Out! help! allas! harrow! he gan to crye,

O stronge lady stoore, what dostow?
And she answerde, Sire, what eyleth yow?
Have pacience, and resoun in youre mynde,

I have yow holpe on bothe youre eyen
blynde,
Up peril of my soule, I shal nat lyen,

As me was taught, to heele with youre eyen,
Was nothyng bet to make yow to see
Than struggle with a man upon a tree.

God woot, I dide it in ful good entente.
Struggle! quod he, ye, algate in it wente!
God yewe yow bothe on shames deth to dyen!

He swyved thee, I saugh it with myne eyen,
And elles be I hanged by the hals!
Thanne is, quod she, my medicyne fals,

for certeinly, if that ye myghte se,
Ye wolde nat seyn thise wordes unto me;
Ye han som glymsyng, and no parfit sighte.

I se, quod he, as wel as evere I myghte,
Thonked be God! with bothe myne eyen two,
And, by my trouthe, me thoughte he dide thee so.

Ye maze, maze, goode sire, quod she;
This thank have I for I have maad yow see;
Alas! quod she, that evere I was so kynde!
Now, dame, quod he, lat al passe out of mynde.

Com down, my lief, and if I have myssayd,
God help me so, as I am yvele apayd.
But, by my fader soule! I wende han seyn,
How that this Damyan had by thee leyn,

And that thy smok had leyn upon his brest.
Ye, sire, quod she, ye may wene as yow lest;
But, sire, a man that waketh out of his sleep,
He may nat sodeynly wel taken keep

Upon a thyng, ne seen it parfitly,
Til that he be adawed verrailly;
Right so a man, that longe hath blynd ybe,
Ne may nat sodeynly so wel yse,

first whan his sighte is newe come ageyn,
As he that hath a day or two yseyn.
Til that youre sighte ysatled be a while,
Ther may ful many a sighte yow bigile.

Beth war, I prey yow; for, by hevene kyng,
ful many a man weneth to seen a thyng,
And it is al another than it semeth.
He that mysconceyvethe, he mysdemeth.

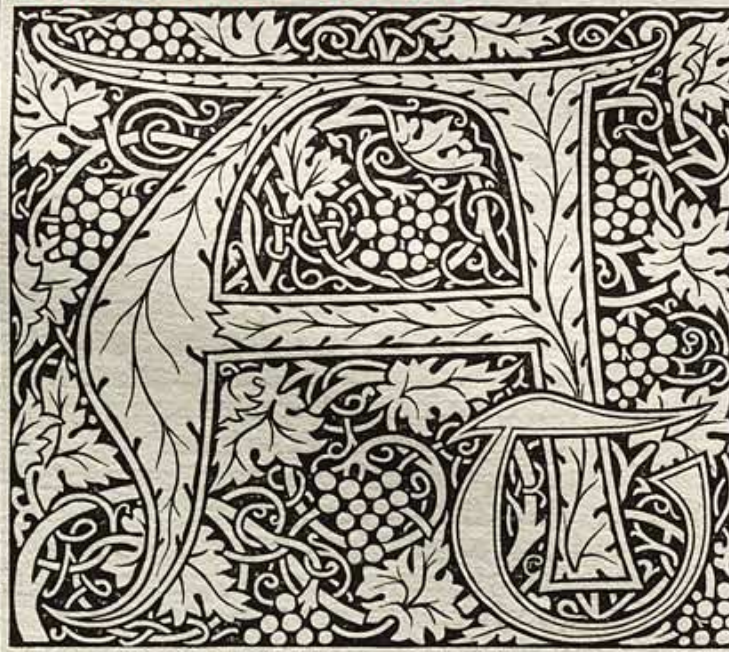
And with that word she leep down fro the tree.
This Januarie, who is glad but he?
He kisseth hire, and clippeth hire ful ofte,
And on hire wombe he stroketh hire ful softe;

And to his palays hoom he hath hire lad.
Now, goode men, I pray yow to be glad.
Thus endeth here my tale of Januarie;
God blesse us, and his mooder Seinte Marie!

Here is ended the Marchantes Tale of Januarie.

HERE BIGYNNETH THE SQUIERES TALE.

Incipit prima pars.



SARRAY, IN THE LAND OF Tartarye,
Ther dwelte a kyng, that werreyed Russye,

Words of the Host to the Squire.

Goddes mercy!
seyde oure host tho,
Now swich a wyf I
pray God kepe me fro!
Lo, whiche sleighes
and subtilitees
In wommen been! for
ay as bisy as bees
Been they, us sely men
for to deceyve;

And from a sothe evere wol they weye.
By this Marchantes tale it preveth weel.
But doutelees, as trewe as any steel
I have a wyf, though that she poure be;
But of hir tonge a labbyng shrewe is she,
And yet she hath an heep of vices mo;
Therof no fors, lat alle swiche thynges go.
But wyte ye what? In conseil be it seyde,
Me reweth soore I am unto hire teyd;
for, and I sholde rekenen every vice
Whiche that she hath, ywis, I were to nyce,
And cause why; it sholde reported be
And toold to hire of somme of this meynce;
Of whom, it nedeth nat for to declare,
Syn wommen konnen outen swich chaffare;
And eek my wit suffiseth nat therto
To tellen al; wherfore my tale is do.

SQUIRE, come neer, if it youre wille be,
And sey somwhat of love; for certes, ye
Konnen theron as mucche as any man.

Nay, sir, quod he, but I wol seye as I kan
With hertly wyl; for I wol nat rebelle
Agayn youre lust; a tale wol I telle.
Have me excused, if I speke amys,
My wyl is good; and lo, my tale is this.

Thurgh which ther deyde many a doughty man.

This noble kyng was cleped Cambynskan,
Whiche in his tyme was of so greet renoun
That ther was nowher in no regioun
So excellent a lord in alle thyng;
Hym lakked noght that longeth to a kyng.
As of the secte of which that he was born
He kepte his lay, to which that he was sworn;

And therto he was hardy, wys, and riche,
And piȝous and just, alwey yliche;
Sooth of his word, benigne and honourable,
Of his corage as any centre stable;
Yong, fressh, and strong, in armes desirous
As any bacheler of al his hous.

A fair persone he was, and fortunat,
And kepte alwey so wel roial estat
That ther was nowher swich another man.

This noble kyng, this Cartre Cambynskan
Hadde two sones on Elpheta his wyf,
Of whiche the eldeste highte Algarsyf,



That oother sone was cleped Cambalo.
A doghter hadde this worthy kyng also,
That yongest was, and highte Canacee.

But for to telle yow al hir beautee
It lyth nat in my tonge nyn my konnyng;
I dar nat undertake so heigh a thyng.

Mynglish eek is insufficient;
It mooste been a rethor excellent
That koude his colours longynge for that art.

If he sholde hire discryven every part.
I am noon swich, I moot speke as I kan.

And so bifel that, whan this Cambynskan
Hath twenty wynter born his diademe,
As he was wont fro yer to yer, I deme,

he leet the feeste of his nativitee
Doon cryen thurghout Sarray his citee,
The last Idus of March, after the yer.

THE BAS, the sonne, ful joly was and
deleer,

for he was neigh his exaltacioun
In Martes face, and in his mansioun
In Aries, the colerik hootte signe.

Ful lusty was the wedder and benigne,
For which the fowles, agayn the sonne sheene,
What for the sesoun and the yonge grene,

ful loude songen hire affectiouns;
hem semed han geten hem protecciouns
Agayn the sward of wynter keene and coold.

This Cambynskan, of which I have yow
toold,

In roial vestiment sit on his deys,
With diademe, ful heighe in his paleys,
And halt his feeste, so solempne & so ryche,
That in this world ne was ther noon it lyche.

Of which if I shal tellen al tharray,
Thanne wolde it occupie a someres day;
And eek it nedeth nat for to devyse

At every cours the ordre of hire servyse.
I wol nat tellen of hir strange sewes,
Ne of hir swannes, ne of hire heronsewes.

Eek in that lond, as tellen knyghtes olde,
Ther is som mete that is ful deynte holde
That in this lond men recche of it but smal;

Ther nys no man that may reporten al.
I wol nat taryen yow, for it is pryme,
And for it is no fruyt but los of tyme;

Unto my firste I wole have my recours.
And so bifel that, after the thridde cours,
Whil that this kyng sit thus in his

nobleys,

herknyng his mynstralles hir thynges pleye
Biform hym at the bord deliciously,
In at the halle/dore, al sodeynly,

Ther cam a knyght upon a steede of bras,
And in his hand a brood mirour of glas.
Upon his thombe he hadde of gold a ring,

And by his syde a naked swerd hangyng;
And up he rideth to the heighe bord.
In al the halle ne was ther spoken a word
for merueille of this knyght; hym to biholde
ful bisily ther wayten yonge and olde.

THIS strange knyght, that cam thus sodeyntly,
Alarmed save his heed ful richely,
Saleweth kyng and queene, and lordes alle,
By ordre, as they seten in the halle,
With so heigh reverence and obeisaunce,
As wel in speche as in his contaunce,
That Gawain, with his olde curteisye,
Though he were come ageyn out of fairye,
Ne koude hym nat amende with a word.
And after this, biforn the heighe bord,
He with a manly voys seith his message
After the forme used in his langage,
Withouthen vice of silable or of lettre;
And, for his tale sholde seme the bettre,
Accordant to his wordes was his cheere,
As techeth art of speche hem that it leere.
Albeit that I kan nat sowne his stile,
Ne kan nat clymben over so heigh a style,
Yet seye I this, as to commune entente,
Thus muche amounteth al that evere he mente,
If it so be that I have it in mynde.

INDE, The kyng of Arabie and of
My lige lord, on this solempe day
Saleweth yow, as he best kan & may,
And sendeth yow, in honour of youre
feeste,

By me, that am al redy at youre heeste,
This steede of bras, that esily and weel
Kan, in the space of o day natureel,
This is to seyn, in foure and twenty houres,
Wherso yow lyst, in droghte or elles shoures,
Beren youre body into every place
To which youre herte wilneth for to pace,
Withouthen wem of yow, thurgh foul or fair;
Or, if yow lyst to fleen as hye in the air
As dooth an egle whan that hym list to soore,
This same steede shal bere yow everemoore,
Withouthen harm, til ye be ther yow leste,
Though that ye slepen on his bak or reste;
And turne ayeyn with writhyng of a pyn.
He that it wroghte koude ful many a gyn;
He wayted many a constellacioun
Er he had doon this operacioun;
And knew ful many a seel, and many a bond.

THIS mirour eek, that I have in myn hond,
Hath swich a myght that men may in it see
Whan ther shal fallen any adversitee
Unto youre regne, or to youreself also;
And openly who is youre freend or foo.
And over al this, if any lady bright
Hath set hire herte on any maner wight,
If he be fals, she shal his tresoun see,
His newe love and al his subtiltee
So openly, that ther shal nothyng hyde.
Wherfore, ageyn this lusty someres tyde,
This mirour and this ryng, that ye may see,
He hath sent to my lady Canacee,
Yowre excellente doghter that is heere.

THE vertu of the ryng, if ye wol heere,
Is this; that if hire lust it for to were,
Upon hir thombe, or in hir purs it bere,
Ther is no fowel that fleeth under the hevene
That she ne shal wel understonde his stevene,
And knowe his menyng openly and pleyn,
And answer hym in his langage ageyn.
And every gras that groweth upon roote
She shal eek knowe, and whom it wol do boote,
Al be his woundes never so depe and wyde.

THIS naked swerd that hangeth by my syde,
Swich vertu hath, that what man so ye smyte,
Thurghout his armure it wole kerve and byte,
Were it as thikke as is a branched ook;
And what man that is wounded with the strook
Shal never be hool til that yow list, of grace,
To stroke hym with the plat in thilke place.
Ther he is hurt: this is as muche to seyn,
Ye moote with the platte swerd ageyn
Stroke hym in the wounde, and it wol close.
This is a verray sooth, withouthen glose,
It failleth nat whils it is in youre hoold.

AND whan this knyght hath thus his tale
toold,
He rideth out of halle, and down he lighte,
His steede, which that shoon as sonne brighte,
Stant in the court, as stille as any stoon.
This knyght is to his chambre lad anon
And is unarmed and unto mete yset.
The presentes been ful roially yfet,
This is to seyn, the swerd and the mirour,
And born anon into the heighe tour
With certeine officers ordeyned therfore;
And unto Canacee this ryng was bore
Solempnely, ther she sit at the table.
But sikerly, withouthen any fable,
The hors of bras, that may nat be remewed,
It stant as it were to the ground yglewed.
Ther may no man out of the place it dryve
for noon engyn of wyndas ne polyve;
And cause why, for they kan nat the craft.
And therfore in the place they han it laft,
Til that the knyght hath taught hem the manere
To voyden hym, as ye shal after heere.

REET was the prees that swarmeth
to and fro
To gauren on this hors that
stondeth so;
for it so heigh was, and so brood
and long,

So wel proportioned for to been strong,
Right as it were a steede of Lumbardye;
Therwith so horsly, and so quyk of eye,
As if a gentil Poilleys courser were.
for certes, fro his tayl unto his ere,
Nature ne art ne koude hym nat amende
In no degree, as al the peple wende.
But everemoore hir mooste wonder was,
How that it koude goon, and was of bras!
It was of fairye, as the peple semed.
Diverse folk diversely they demed;
As many heddes, as manye wittes ther been.
They murmureden as dooth a swarm of been,
And maden skiles after hir fantasies,

Rehersyng of thise olde poetries;
And seyde that it was lyk the Pegasee,
The hors that hadde wynges for to flece;
Or elles it was the Grekes hors Synoun,
That broghte Troie to destruccioun,
As men in thise olde geestes rede.

IN herte, quod oon, is everemoore in
drede;
I trowe som men of armes been therinne,
That shapen hem this citee for to wynde.

It were right good that al swich thyng were knowe.
Another rowned to his felawe lowe,
And seyde, he lyeth! it is rather lyk
An apparence ymaad by som magyk,
As jogelours pleyen at thise feestes grete.
Of sondry doutes thus they jangle and trete,
As lewed peple demeth comunly
Of thynges that been maad moore subtilly
Than they kan in hir lewednesse comprehend;
They demen gladly to the badder ende.
And somme of hem wondred on the mirour,
That born was up into the maister tour,
How men myghte in it swiche thynges se.

Another answerde, and seyde it myghte wel be
Naturelly, by composiciouns
Of anglis, and of slye reflexiouns;
And seyden, that in Rome was swich oon.
They spoken of Alocen and Vitulon,
And Aristotle, that writen in hir lyves
Of queynte mirours and of prospectives,
As knowen they that han hir bookes herd.

AND oother folk han wondred on the swerd
That wolde peren thurghout every thyng;
And fille in speche of Thelophus the kyng,
And of Achilles with his queynte spere,
for he koude with it bothe heele and dere,
Right in swich wise as men may with the swerd
Of which right now ye han yourselyen herd.
They spoken of sondry hardyng of metal,
And speke of medicynes therewithal,
And how and whanne it sholde yharded be,
Which is unknowe algates unto me.

THIS speke they of Canacees ryng,
And seyden alle, that swich a wonder thyng
Of craft of rynges herde they never noon;
Save that he, Moyses, and kyng Salomon
Hadde a name of konnyng in swich art.
Thus seyn the peple, and drawn hem apart.
But natheles, somme seiden that it was
Wondred to maken of fern/asshen glas,
And yet nys glas nat lyk asshen of fern;
But for they han yknowen it so fern,
Therfore cesseth hir janglyng and hir wonder.
As soore wondren somme on cause of thonder,
On ebbe, on flood, on gossomer, and on myst,
And alle thyng, til that the cause is wist.
Thus jangle they, and demen and devyse.
Til that the kyng gan fro the bord aryse.

THIS hath laft the angle meridional,
And yet ascendyng was the beest roial,
The gentil Leon, with his Aldiran,
Whan that this Cartre kyng, this Cambynskan,
Roos fro his bord, ther that he sat ful hie.
Toform hym gooth the loude mynstralcyne

Til he cam to his chambre of parements,
Theras they sownen diverse instruments
That it is lyk an hevene for to heere.
Now dauncen lusty Venus children deere,
for in the fyssh hir lady sat ful hie,
And looketh on hem with a frendly eye.

THIS noble kyng is set up in his trone;
This strange knyght is fet to hym ful sone,
And on the daunce he gooth with Canacee.
Heere is the revel and the jolitee
That is nat able a dul man to devyse.

He mooste han knowen love and his servyse,
And been a feestlych man as fressh as May,
That sholde yow devysen swich array.
Who koude telle yow the forme of daunces
So unkouth and so fresshe contaunces,
Swich subtil lookyng and dissymulynge
for drede of jalouse mennes aperceyvynge?
No man but Launcelot, and he is deed.
Therfore I passe of al this lustiheed;
I sey namoore, but in this jolynesse
I lete hem, til men to the soper dresse.

THIS styward bit the spices for to hie,
And eek the wyn, in al this melodye.
The usshers and the squiers been ygoon,
The spices and the wyn is come anon.
They ete and drynke, and whan this hadde an ende,
Unto the temple, as reson was, they wende.
The service doon, they soupen al by day;
What nedeth me rehercen hire array?

Ech man woot wel, that at a kynges feeste
Hath plentee, to the mooste and to the leeste,
And deyntees mo than been in my knowyng.

AFTER soper gooth this noble kyng
To seen this hors of bras, with al the route
Of lordes and of ladyes hym aboute.
Swich wondryng was ther on this hors of bras
That, syn the grete sege of Troie was,
Theras men wondred on an hors also,
Ne was ther swich a wondryng as was tho.
But fynally the kyng axeth this knyght
The vertu of this courser and the myght,
And preyde hym to telle his governaunce.

THIS hors anon bigan to trippe and daunce
Whan that this knyght leyde hand upon his
reyns,

And seyde, Sire, ther is namoore to seyne,
But, whan yow list to ryden anywhere,
Ye mooten trille a pyn stant in his ere,
Which I shal telle yow bitwix us two.
Ye moote nempne hym to what place also
Or to what contree that yow list to ryde.
And whan ye come ther as yow list abyde,
Bidde hym descende, and trille another pyn,
for therin lith theffect of al the gyn,
And he wol down descende and doon youre wille;
And in that place he wol abyde stille,
Though al the world the contrarie hadde ysware;
He shal nat thennes been ydrawe ne ybore.
Or, if yow liste bidde hym thennes goon,
Trille this pyn, and he wol vanysshe anon
Out of the sighte of every maner wight,
And come agayn, be it by day or nyght,
Whan that yow list to clepen hym ageyn

In swich a gyse as I shal to yow seyn
Bitwixe yow and me, and that ful soone.
Ride whan yow list, ther is namooore to doone.

INFORMED whan the kyng was of
that knyght,
And hath conceived in his wit aright
The manere and the forme of al this thyng,
ful glad and blithe, this noble doughty kyng
Repeireth to his revel as biforn.

HE brydel is unto the tour yborn
And kept among his jueles levee and
deere,
The hors vanysshed, I noot in what manere,
Out of hir sighte; ye gete namooore of me;
But thus I lete in lust and jolitee
This Cambynskan his lordes festeynge,
Til that wel ny the day bigan to sprynge.
Explicit prima pars. Sequitur pars secunda.



NORICE OF DIGESTIOUN, the sleepe,
Gan on hem wynke, & bad hem taken keepe.
That muchel drynke & labour wolde han reeste;
And with a galpyng mouth hem alle he keeste,
And seyde, it was tyme to lye adoun,
for blood was in his domynacioun.
Cherisseth blood, natures freend, quod
he.
They thanken hym galpyng, by two, by thre,
And every wight gan drawe hym to his reeste.
As sleep hem bad; they tooke it for the beste.

IRE dremes shal nat been ytold for
me;
ful were hire heddes of fumositee,
That causeth dreem, of which ther nys no
charge.
They slepen til that it was pryme large,
The mooste part, but it were Canacee.

SHE was ful mesurable, as wommen
be;
for of hir fader hadde she take leve
To goon to reeste, soone after it was
eve.
Hir liste nat appalled for to be,
Ne on the morwe unfeestlich for to se;
And slepte hire firste sleep, and thanne awook.
For swich a joye she in hir herte took
Bothe of hir queynte ryng and hire mirour,
That twenty tyme she changed hir colour;
And in hire sleepe, right for impressioun
Of hire mirour, she hadde a visioun.
Wherfore, er that the sonne gan up glyde,
She cleped on hir maistresse hire bisyde,
And seyde, that hire liste for to ryse.

HISE olde wommen that been gladly wyse,
As is hire maistresse, answerde hire anon,
And seyde, Madame, whider wil ye goon
Thus cry? for the folk been alle on reeste.
I wol, quod she, arise, for me leste
No lenger for to slepe, and walke aboute.
Hir maistresse clepeth wommen a greet route,
And up they ryse, wel a ten or twelve;
Up riseth fresshe Canacee hirselve,
As rody and bright as dooth the yonge sonne,
That in the Ram is four degrees up ronne;
Noon hyer was he, whan she redy was;
And forth she walketh esily a pas,
Arrayed after the lusty sesoun soote
Lightly, for to pleye and walke on foote,
Nat but with fyve or sixe of hir meynee,
And in a trench, forth in the park, gooth she.
The vapour, which that fro the erthe glood,
Made the sonne to seme rody and brood;
But nathelees, it was so fair a sighte
That it made alle hire hertes for to lighte,
What for the sesoun, and the morwenyng,
And for the foweles that she herde synge;
For right anon she wiste what they mente
Right by hir song, and knew al hire entente.

HE knotte, why that every tale is toold,
If it be taryed til that lust be coold
Of hem that han it after herked yooore,
The savour passeth ever lenger the moore,
for fulsomnesse of his prolixitee;
And by the same resoun thynketh me,
I sholde to the knotte condescende,
And maken of hir walkyng soone an ende.

MYDDE a tree fordrye, as whit as
chalk,
As Canacee was pleying in hir
walk,
Ther sat a faucon over hire heed
ful hye,
That with a pitous voys so gan to crye
That all the wode resounded of hire cry.
Ydeten hath she herself so pitously
With bothe hir wynges til the rede blood
Ran endelong the tree theras she stood.
And evere in oon she cryde alwey and shrighthe,
And with hir beek hirselven so she prighte,
That ther nys tygre, ne noon so cruell beste,

That dwelleth outhur in wode or in foreste
That nolde han wept, if that he wepe koude,
for sorwe of hire, she shrighthe alwey so loude,
for ther nas nevere yet no man on lyve,
If that I koude a faucon wel diseryve,
That herde of swich another of fairnesse,
As wel of plumage as of gentillesse
Of shap, and al that myghte yrekened be.
A faucon peregryn thanne semed she
Of fremde land; and everemoore, as she stood,
She swowneth now and now for lakke of blood,
Til wel neigh is she fallen fro the tree.

HIS faire kynges doghter, Canacee,
That on hir fynger baar the queynte ryng,
Thurgh which she understood wel every
thyng

That any fowel may in his ledene seyn,
And koude answer hym in his ledene ageyn,
Hath understonde what this faucon seyde,
And wel neigh for the routhe almost she deyde.
And to the tree she gooth ful hastily,
And on this faucon looketh pitously,
And heeld hir lappe abrood, for wel she wiste
That faucon moste fallen fro the twiste,
Whan that it swowned next, for lakke of blood.
A longe while to wayten hire she stood,
Til atte laste she spak in this manere
Unto the hawk, as ye shal after heere:

WHAT is the cause, if it be for to telle,
That ye be in this furial pyne of belle?
Quod Canacee unto the hawk above,
Is this for sorwe of deeth, or los of love?
For, as I trowe, thise been causes two
That causen moost a gentil herte wo.
Of oother harm it nedeth nat to speke,
for ye youreself upon yourself yow wreke,
Which proveth wel that outhur love or drede
Moot been enchesoun of youre cruel dede,
Syn that I see noon oother wight yow chace.
for love of God, as dooth yourselfen grace
Or what may been youre help; for West nor Est
Ne saugh I nevere, er now, no bryd ne beest
That ferde with hymself so pitously.
Ye slee me with youre sorwe, verrailly;
I have of yow so greet compassioun.
for Goddes love, com fro the tree adoun;
And, as I am a kynges doghter trewe,
If that I verrailly the cause knewe
Of youre disese, if it lay in my myght
I wolde amende it, er that it were nyght,
As wisly helpe me grete God of kynde!
And herbes shal I right ynowe yfynde
To heele with youre hurtes hastily.
Tho shrighthe this faucon yet moore pitously
Than ever she dide, and fil to grounde anon,
And lith aswowne, deed, and lyk a stoon,
Til Canacee hath in hire lappe hire take
Unto the tyme she gan of swough awake;
And, after that she of hir swough gan breyde,
Right in hir haukes ledene thus she seyde:
That pitee renneth soone in gentil herte,
feelynge his similitude in peynes smerte,
Is preved al day, as men may it see

The
Squieres
Tale

As wel by werk as by auctoritee;
for gentil herte kitheth gentillesse.
I se wel, that ye han of my distresse
Compassioun, my faire Canacee,
Of veray wommanly benignytee
That nature in youre principles hath set.
But for noon hope for to fare the bet,
But for to obeye unto youre herte free,
And for to maken othere be war by me,
As by the whelp chasted is the leoun,
Right for that cause and that conclusioun,
Whil that I have a leyser and a space,
Myn harm I wol confessen, er I pace.
And evere, whil that oon hir sorwe tolde,
That oother weep, as she to water wolde,
Til that the faucon bad hire to be stille,
And, with a syk, right thus she seyde hir wille.
THER I was bred, alas! that harde day!
And fostred in a roche of marbul gray
So tendrely, that nothyng eyled me,
I nyste nat what was adversitee,
Til I koude flee ful hye under the sky.
Tho dwelte a tercelet me faste by,
That semed welle of alle gentillesse;
Al were he ful of tresoun and falsnesse,
It was so wrapped under humble cheere,
And under hewe of trouthe in swich manere,
Under plesance, and under bisy peyne,
That I ne koude han wend he koude feyne,
So depe in greyn he dyed his coloures.
Right as a serpent hit hym under floures
Til he may seen his tyme for to byte,
Right so this god of love, this ypocryte,
Dooth so his cerymonyes and obeisaunces,
And kepeth in semblant alle his observaunces
That sowneth into gentillesse of love.
As in a tounbe is al the faire above,
And under is the corps, swich as ye woot,
Swich was this ypocrite, bothe coold and hoot,
And in this wise he served his entente,
That, save the feend, noon wiste what he mente.
Til he so longe hadde wopen and compleyned,
And many a yeer his service to me feyned,
Til that myn herte, to pitous and to nyce,
Al innocent of his crowned malice,
forfered of his deeth, as thoughte me,
Upon his othes and his seuretee,
Graunted hym love, on this condicioun,
That everemoore myn honour and renoun
Were saved, bothe privee and apert;
This is to seyn, that after his desert,
I yaf hym al myn herte and al my thought,
God woot and he, that otherwise noght,
And took his herte in chaunge for myn for ay.
But sooth is seyde, goon sithen many a day,
A trewe wight and a theef thenken nat oon.
And whan he saugh the thyng so fer ygoon,
That I hadde graunted hym fully my love,
In swich a gyse as I have seyde above,
And yeven hym my trewe herte, as free
As he swoor he his herte yaf to me;
Anon this tigre, ful of doublenesse
fil on his knees with so devout humblesse,

With so heigh reverence, as by his cheere
So lyk a gentil love of manere,
So raysshed, as it semed, for the joye
That nevere Jason, ne Parys of Troye,
Jason? Certes, ne noon oother man
Syn Lameth was, that alderfirst bigan
To loven two, as writen folk biforn,
Ne nevere, syn the firste man was born,
Ne koude man, by twenty thousand part,
Countrefete the sophymes of his art;
Ne were worthy unbokle his galoche,
Ther doublenesse or feynyng sholde approche
Ne so koude thanke a wight as he dide me!
His manere was an hevener for to see
Til any womman, were she never so wys;
So peynted he and kembde at point devys,
As wel his wordes as his contenance;
And I so loved hym for his obeisaunce,
And for the trouthe I demed in his herte,
That, if so were that any thyng hym smerte,
Al were it never so lite, and I it wiste,
Me thoughte, I felte deeth myn herte twiste.
And shortly, so ferforth this thyng is went,
That my wyl was his willes instrument;
This is to seyn, my wyl obeyed his wyl
In alle thyng, as fer as resoun fil,
Kepynge the boundes of my worship evere,
Ne nevere hadde I thyng so lief, ne levere,
As hym, God woot! ne nevere shal namo.
This lasteth longer than a yeer or two,
That I supposed of hym noght but good.
But finally, thus atte last it stood,
That fortune wolde that he moste twynne
Out of that place which that I was inne.
Wher me was wo, that is no questioun;
I kan nat make of it discrepcioun,
for o thyng dare I tellen boldely,
I knowe what is the peyne of deeth therby;
Swich harme I felte for he ne myghte bileve.
So on a day of me he took his leve,
So sorwefully eek, that I wende verrailly
That he had felt as muche harm as I,
Whan that I herde hym speke, & saugh his hewe;
But natheles, I thoughte he was so trewe,
And eek that he repaire sholde ageyn
Withinne a litel while, sooth to seyn;
And resoun wolde eek that he moste go
for his honour, as ofte it happeth so,
That I made vertu of necessitee,
And took it wel, syn that it moste be.
As I best myghte, I hidde fro hym my sorwe
And took hym by the hond, Seint John to borne,
And seyde hym thus: Lo, I am youre al;
Beth swich as I to yow have been, and shal.
What he answerde, it nedeth noght reherce;
Who kan sey bet than he, who kan do werse?
Whan he hath al wel seyde, thanne hath he doon.
Therefore bihoveth him a ful long spoon
That shal ete with a feend, thus herde I seyn.
So atte laste he moste forth his weye,
And forth he fleeth, til he cam ther hym leste.
Whan it cam hym to purpos for to reste,
I trowe he hadde thilke text in mynde,

That alle thyng repeyrynge to his kynde
Gladeth hymself, thus seyn men, as I gesse.
Men loven of propre kynde newefangelnesse,
As briddes doon that men in cages fede;
for though thou nyght and day take of hem hede,
And strave hir cage faire and softe as silk,
And yeve hem sugre, hony, breed and milk,
Yet right anon, as that his dore is uppe,
He with his feet wol spurne adoun his cuppe,
And to the wode he wole, and wormes ete;
So newefangel been they of hire mete
And loven noveltrie of propre kynde;
No gentillesse of blood ne may hem bynde.
O ferde this tercelet, alas the day!
Though he were gentil born, and fressh
and gay,
And goodlich for to seen, and humble and free,
He saugh upon a tyme a kyte flee,
And sodelynt he loved this kyte so,
That al his love is elene fro me ago,
And hath his trouthe falsed in this wyse;
Thus hath the kyte my love in hire servyse,
And I am lorn withouten remedie.
And with that word this faucon gan to crie,
And swowned eft in Canacees barm.
REET was the sorwe for the haukes
harm
That Canacee and alle hir women
made;
They nyste how they myghte the
faucon glade;
But Canacee hom bereth hire in hir lappe,
And softly in plastres gan hire wrappe,
Ther as she with hire beek hadde hurt hirselve.
O kan nat Canacee but herbes delve
Out of the ground, and make salves newe,
Of herbes preciose, and fyne of hewe,
To heelen with this hawk; fro day to nyght
She dooth hire bisynesse and hire fulle myght,
And by hire beddes heed she made a mewe,
And covered it with veluettes blewe
In signe of trouthe that is in wommen sene.
And al withoute, the mewe is peynted grene,
In which were peynted alle thise false fowles,
As beth thise tidyses, tercelettes and owles;
Right for despit, were peynted hem bisyde,
And pyes, on hem for to crie and chydre.
Thus lete I Canacee, hir hawk kepynge,
I wol namoore as now speke of hir ryng,
Til it come eft to purpos for to seyn
How that this faucon gat hire love ageyn
Repentant, as the storie telleth us,
By mediacioun of Cambalus,
The kynges sone, of which I to yow tolde;
But hennes forth I wol my proces holde
To speke of adventures and of batailles,
That nevere yet was herd so grete mervailles.
FIRST wol I telle yow of Cambynskan,
That in his tyme many a citee wan;
And after wol I speke of Hgarsif,

How that he wan Theodora to his wif,
for whom ful ofte in greet peril he was,
Ne hadde he ben holpen by the steede of bras;
And after wol I speke of Cambalo,
That faught in lystes with the bretheren two
for Canacee, er that he myghte hire wyne;
An ther I lefte I wol ageyn bigynne.
Explicit pars secunda. Incipit pars tercia.
Appollo whirleth up his chaar so hye,
Til that the god Mercurius hous the slye...
There is no more of this Tale done by Chaucer.

Deere folwen the wordes of the frankelyn to the
Squier, & the wordes of the Hoost to the franke-
lyn.

IN feith, Squier, thou hast
thee wel quit,
And gentilly I preise wel
thy wit,
Quod the frankeleyn, con-
siderynge thy yowthe,
So feelyngly thou spekest,
sire, I allowe the!
As to my doom, ther is noon
that is heere
Of eloquence that shal be thy peere,
If that thou lyve; God yeve thee good chaunce,
And in vertu sende thee continuance;
for of thy speche I have greet deyntee.
I have a sone, and, by the Trinitee!
I hadde levere than twenty pound worth lond,
Though it right now were fallen in myn hond,
He were a man of swich discrecioun,
As that ye been! fy on possessioun,
But if a man be vertuous withal.
I have my sone snybbed, and yet shal,
for he to vertu listeth nat entende;
But for to pleye at dees, and to despende,
And lese al that he hath, is his usage.
And he hath levere talen with a page
Than to comune with any gentil wight
There he myghte lerne gentillesse aright.
SCRIP for youre gentillesse, quod our
Hoost;
What, frankeleyn? pardee, sire, wel thou
woost
That ech of yow moot tellen atte leste
A tale or two, or breken his biheste.
That knowe I wel, sire, quod the frankeleyn,
I prey yow, haveth me nat in desdeyn
Though to this man I speke a word or two.
Telle on thy tale, withouten wordes mo.
Gladly, sire Hoost, quod he, I wole obeye
Unto your wyl; now herkneth what I seye.
I wol yow nat contrarien in no wyse
As fer as that my wittes wol suffyse;
I prey to God that it may plesen yow,
Thanne woot I wel that it is good ynow.
Explicit.

The prologe of the frankeleyns tale.

THISE olde gentil Britons in hir dayes Of diverse adventures maden layes, Rymeyed in hir firste Briton tonge; Whiche layes with hir instruments they songe, Or elles redden hem for hir plesauce; And oon of hem have I in remembrance, Which I shal seyn with good wyl as I kan.

HEERE BIGYNNETH THE FRANKLEYN'S TALE.

ARMORIK, that called is Britayne, Ther was a knyght that loved and dide his payne To serve a lady in his beste wise; And many a labour, many a greet emprise He for his lady wroughte, er she were wonne; for she was oon, the faireste under sonne, And eek therto come of so heigh kynrede, That wel unnethes dorste this knyght, for drede, Telle hire his wo, his peyne, & his distresse. But atte laste, she, for his worthynesse, And namely for his meke obeysaunce, Hath swich a pitee caught of his penaunce, That pryvely she fil of his accord, To take hym for hir housbonde and hir lord, Of swich lordshipe as men han over hir wyves;

And for to lede the moore in blisse hir lyves, Of his free wyl he swoor hire as a knyght, That nevere in al his lyf he, day ne nyght, Ne sholde upon hym take no maistrie Agayn hir wyl, ne hithe hire jalousie; But hire obeye, and folwe hir wyl in al, As any lover to his lady shal; Save that the name of soveraynetee, That wolde he have, for shame of his degree.

But, sires, bycause I am a burel man, At my bigynnyng first I yow biseche, Have me excused of my rude speche. I lerned nevere rethorik certeyn; Thyng that I speke, it moot be bare and pleyne. I sleep nevere on the Mount of Pernaso, Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Cithero. Colours ne knowe I none, withouten drede, But swiche colours as growen in the mede, Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte. Colours of rethorik been me to queynte; My spirit feelet hought of swich mateere, But if yow list, my tale shul ye heere.

SHE thanked hym, and with ful greet humblesse, She seyde, Sire, sith of youre gentillesse Ye profre me to have so large a reyne, Ne wolde nevere God bitwixe us twayne, As in my gilt, were outhere werre or stryf, Sire, I wol be youre humble trewe wyf; Have heer my trouthe, til that myn herte breste.

Thus been they bothe in quiete & in reste. OR o thyng, sires, sauflly dar I seye, That freendes everych oother moot obeye,

If they wol longe holden compaignye. Love wol nat been constreyned by maistrie; Whan maistrie comth, the god of love anon Beteth his wynges, and farewel! he is gon! Love is a thyng as any spirit free; Whommen of kynde desiren libertee, And nat to been constreyned as a thral; And so doon men, if I sooth seyen shal. Looke, who that is moost pacient in love, He is at his advantage al above. Pacience is an heigh vertu certeyn; For it venquysseth, as thise clerkes seyn, Thynges that rigour sholde nevere atteyne. For every word men may nat chide or pleyne. Lerneth to suffre, or elles so moot I goon, Ye shul it lerne, wherso ye wole or noon; For in this world, certein, ther no wight is That he ne dooth or seith somtyme amys. Ire, siknesse, or constellacioun, Wyn, wo, or chaungynge of complexioun, Causeth ful ofte to doon amys or speken. On every wrong a man may nat be wroken; After the tyme moste be temperaunce To every wight that kan on governaunce. And therefore hath this wise worthy knyght, To lyve in ese, suffraunce hire bihight, And she to hym ful wisly gan to swere That nevere sholde ther be defaute in here.

HEERE may men seen an humble wys lord, Thus hath she take hir servant and hir lord, Servant in love, and lord in mariage,



Channe was he bothe in lordship and servage; Servage? nay, but in lordshipe above, Sith he hath bothe his lady and his love; His lady, certes, and his wyf also, The which that lawe of love acordeth to. And whan he was in this prosperitee, Hoom with his wyf he gooth to his contree, Nat fer fro Denmark, ther his dwelling was, Wheras he lyveth in blisse and in solas.

HO koude telle, but he hadde wedded be, The joye, the ese, and the prosperitee That is bitwixe an housbonde & his wyf?

A YEER & moore lasted this blisful lyf, Til that the knyght of which I speke of thus, That of Kayrrod was cleped Arveragus, Shoop hym to goon & dwelle a yeer or twayne In Engelond, that cleped was eek Briteyne, To seeke in armes worship and honour, For al his lust he sette in swich labour; And dwelled there two yeer, the book seith thus.

All wol I stynte of this Arveragus, And speken I wole of Dorigene his wyf, That loveth hire housbonde as hire hertes lyf.

for his absence wepeth she and siketh, As doon thise noble wyves whan hem liketh. She moorneth, waketh, wayleth, fasteth, pleyne; Desir of his presence hire so distreyneth, That al this wyde world she sette at nocht. Hire freendes, whiche that knewe hir hevvy thocht, Conforten hire in al that ever they may; They prechen hire, they telle hire nyght and day, That causeles she sleeth herself, alas! And every confort possible in this cas They doon to hire with al hire bisynesse, Al for to make hire leve hire hevynesse.

By proces, as ye knowen everichoon, Men may so longe graven in a stoon Til som figure therinne emprented be. So longe han they comforted hire, til she Receyved hath, by hope and by resoun, The emprenting of hire consolacioun, Thurgh which hir grete sorwe gan aswage; She may nat alwey duren in swich rage.

AND eek Arveragus, in al this care, Hath sent hire lettres boon of his welfare, And that he wol come hastily agayn;

Or elles hadde this sorwe hir herte slayn.
HIRE freendes sawe hir sorwe gan to slake,
And preyde hire on knees, for Goddes sake,
To come and romen hire in compaignye,
Awey to dryve hire derke fantasye.
And finally she graunted that requeste;
for wel she saugh that it was for the beste.

MOW stood hire castel faste by the
see,
And often with hire freendes walketh
shee
Hire to disporte upon the bank an
heigh,
Whereas she many a ship and barge seigh
Seillynge hir cours, whereas hem liste go;
But thanne was that a parcel of hire wo.
for to hirself ful ofte Alas! seith she,
Is ther no ship, of so manye as I se,
Wol bryngen hom my lord? Thanne were myn
herte

Al warissed of his bittre peynes smerte.
ANOTHER tyme ther wolde she sitte and
thynke,

And caste hir eyen downward fro the brynke.
But whan she saugh the grisly rokkes blake,
for verray feere so wolde hir herte quake,
That on hire feet she myghte hire noght sustene.
Thanne wolde she sitte adoun upon the grene,
And pitously into the see biholde,
And seyn right thus, with sorweful sikkes colde:
Eterne God, that thurgh thy purveiaunce
Ledest the world by certein governaunce,
In ydel, as men seyn, ye nothyng make;
But, Lord, thise grisly feendly rokkes blake,
That semen rather a foul confusioun
Of werk than any fair creacioun
Of swich a parfit wys God and a stable,
Why han ye wrought this werk unresonable?
for by this werk, south, north, ne west, ne east,
Ther nys yfostred man, ne bryd, ne beest;
It dooth no good, to my wit, but anoyeth.
Se ye nat, Lord, how mankynde it destroyeth?
An hundred thousand bodies of mankynde
Han rokkes slayn, al be they nat in mynde,
Which mankynde is so fair part of thy werk
That thou it madest lyk to thyn owene merk.
Thanne semed it ye hadde a greet chiertee
Toward mankynde; but how thanne may it bee
That ye swiche meenes make it to destroyen,
Whiche meenes do no good, but evere anoyen?
I woot wel clerkes wol seyn, as hem leste,
By arguments, that al is for the beste,
Though I ne kan the causes nat yknowe.
But thilke God, that made wynd to blowe,
As kepe my lord! this my conclusioun;
To clerkes lete I al disputisoun.
But wolde God that alle thise rokkes blake
Were sonken into helle for his sake.
Thise rokkes sleen myn herte for the feere.

Thus wolde she seyn with many a pitous teere.
HIRE freendes sawe that it was no disport
To romen by the see, but discomfort;
And shopen for to pleyen somwher elles.

They leden hire by ryveres and by welles,
And eek in othere places delitable;
They dauncen, and they pleyen at ches and tables.
So on a day, right in the morwe tyde,
Unto a gardyn that was ther bisyde,
In which that they hadde maad hir ordinaunce
Of vitaille and of oother purveiaunce,
They goon and pleye hem al the longe day;
And this was in the sixte morwe of May,
Which May hadde peynted with his softe shoures
This gardyn ful of leves and of floures;
And craft of mannes hand so curiously
Arrayed hadde this gardyn, trewely,
That nevere was ther gardyn of swich prys,
But if it were the verray Paradys.
The odour of floures and the fresshe sighte
Wolde han makid any herte lighte
That evere was born, but if to greet siknesse,
Or to greet sorwe, helde it in distresse;
So ful it was of beautee with plesaunce.
After dyner gonne they to daunce,
And synge also, save Dorigen allone,
Which made alwey hir compleint and hir
moone;

for she ne saugh hym on the daunce go,
That was hir housbonde and hir love also.
But natheles she moste a tyme abyde,
And with good hope lete hir sorwe slyde.

DON this daunce, amonges
othere men,
Daunced a squier biforen Dorigen,
That fressher was, and jolyer of
array,

As to my doom, than is the
monthe of May;
He syngeth, daunceth, passyng any man
That is, or was, sith that the world bigan.
Therwith he was, if men sholde hym discryve,
Oon of the beste farynge man on lyve;
Yong, strong, right vertuous, and riche and wys,
And wel biloved, and holden in greet prys.
And shortly, if the sothe I tellen shal,
Anwityng of this Dorigen at al,
This lusty squier, servant to Venus,
Which that ycleped was Aurelius,
Hadde loved hire best of any creature
Two yer and moore, as was his aventure,
But nevere dorste he telle hire his grevaunce;
Withouthen coppe he drank al his penaunce.
He was despayred, nothyng dorste he seye,
Save in his songes somewhat wolde he wreye
His wo, as in a general compleynnyng;
He seyde he lovede, and was biloved nothyng.
Of swich matere made he manye layes,
Songes, compleintes, roundels, vielayes;
How that he dorste nat his sorwe telle,
But langwyssheth, as a furye dooth in helle;
And dye he moste, he seyde, as dide Ekko
for Narcisus, that dorste nat telle hir wo.
In oother manere than ye heer me seye,
Ne dorste he nat to hire his wo biwreye;
Save that, paraventure, som tyme at daunces,
Ther yonge folk kepen hir observaunces,



It may wel be he looked on hir face
In swich a wise, as man that asketh grace;
But nothyng wiste she of his entente.
Natheles, it happed, er they thennes wente,
Bycause that he was hire neighebour,
And was a man of worship and honour,
And hadde yknowen hym of tyme yooore,
They fille in speche; and forth moore and
moore

Unto his purpos drough Aurelius,
And whan he saugh his tyme, he sayde thus:

MADAME, quod he, by God that this
world made,
So that I wiste it myghte youre herte

glade,
I wolde, that day that youre Arveragus
Wente over the see, that I, Aurelius,
Hadde went ther nevere I sholde have come
agayn;

for wel I woot my servyce is in vayn.
My guerdoun is but brestyng of myn herte;
Madame, reweth upon my peynes smerte;
for with a word ye may me sleen or save,
Heere at youre feet God wolde that I were
grave!
I ne have as now no leyser moore to seye;
Have mercy, sweete, or ye wol do me deye!

SHE gan to looke upon Aurelius:
Is this your wyl, quod she, and sey ye
thus?

Nevere erst, quod she, ne wiste I what ye
mente;
But now, Aurelie, I knowe youre entente,
By thilke God that yaf me soule and lyf,
Ne shal I nevere been untrewed wyf
In word ne werk; as fer as I have wit,
I wol been his to whom that I am knyght!
Taak this for fynal answer as of me.

But after that in pley thus seyde she:
Aurelie, quod she, by heighe God above!
Yet wolde I graunte yow to been youre love,
Syn I yow se so pitously complayne;
Looke what day that, endelong Britayne,
Ye remove alle the rokkes, stoon by stoon,
That they ne lette ship ne boot to goon,
I seye, whan ye han maad the coost so clene
Of rokkes, that ther nys no stoon ysene,
Thanne wol I love yow best of any man;
Have heer my trouthe in al that evere I kan!

IS ther noon oother grace in yow? quod
he.
No, by that Lord, quod she, that
maked me!
for wel I woot that it shal nevere bityde.

Lat swiche folies out of youre herte slyde.
What deynthe sholde a man han in his lyf
for to go love another mannes wyf,
That hath hir body whan so that hym lyketh?
Aurelius ful ofte soore siketh.

Was Aurelie, whan that he this herde,
And with a sorweful herte he thus
answerde:

Madame, quod he, this were an impossible,
Thanne moot I dye of sodeyn deth horrible!
And with that word he turned hym anon.
Tho come hir othere freendes many oon,
And in the aleyes romeden up and doun,
And nothyng wiste of this conclusioun,
But sodeynly bigonne revel newe,
Til that the brighte sonne loste his hewe;
for thorisonte hath rest the sonne his lyght;
This is as muche to seye as it was nyght;
And boom they goon in joye and in solas,
Save oonly wrecche Aurelius, alas!

Ne to his hous is goon with sorweful herte;
He seeth he may nat fro his deeth asterte.
Hym semed that he felte his herte colde;
Up to the hevne his handes he gan holde,
And on his knowes bare he sette hym doun,
And in his ravyng seyde his orisoun.
for verray wo out of his wit he breyde.
He nyste what he spak, but thus he seyde;
With pitous herte his pleynt hath he bigonne
Unto the goddes, and first unto the sonne:

Ne seyde, Appollo, god and governour,
Of every plaunte, herbe, tree and flour,
That yvest, after thy declinacioun,
To ech of hem his tyme and his sesoun,
As thyn herberwe chaungeth lowe or heighe;
Lord Phebus, cast thy merciable eighe
On wrecche Aurelie, which that am but lorn.
Lo, lord! my lady hath my deeth ysworn
Withoute gilt, but thy benignytee
Upon my dedly herte have som pitee!
for wel I woot, lord Phebus, if yow lest,
Ye may me helpen, save my lady, best.

Now vouchethsauf that I may yow devyse
How that I may been holpe and in what wyse.
Your blisful suster, Lucina the sheene,
That of the see is chief goddesse and queene,
Though Neptunus have deitee in the see,
Yet Emperesse aboven hym is she:

Ye knowen wel, lord, that right as hir desir
Is to be quyked and lightned of youre fir,
for which she folweth yow ful bisily,
Right so the see desireth naturelly
To folwen hire, as she that is goddesse
Bothe in the see and ryveres moore and lesse.
Wherfore, lord Phebus, this is my requeste,
Do this miracle, or do myn herte breste;

That now, next at this opposicioun,
Which in the signe shal be of the Leoun,
As preieth hire so greet a flood to brynge,
That fyve fadme at the leeste it oversprynge
The hyste rokke in Armorik Briteyne;
And lat this flood endure yeres tweyne;
Thanne certes to my lady may I seye:

Holdeth youre heste, the rokkes been aweye.
Lord Phebus, dooth this miracle
for me;

Preye hire she go no faster cours than ye;
I seye, preyeth your suster that she go
No faster cours than ye thise yeres two.
Thanne shal she been evene atte fulle alway,
And spryng/flood laste bothe nyght and day.
And, but she vouchesauf in swich manere
To graunte me my sovereyn lady deere,
Prey hire to synken every rok adoun
Into hir owene derke region
Under the ground, ther Pluto dwelleth inne,
Or nevere mo shal I my lady wyne.
Thy temple in Delphos wol I barefoot seke;
Lord Phebus, se the teeris on my cheke,
And of my peyne have som compassioun!
And with that word in swowne he fil adoun,
And longe tyme he lay forth in a trauce.

Is brother, which that knew of his penaunce,
Up caughte hym, and to bedde he hath hym
brought.

Dispeyred in this torment and this thocht
Lete I this woful creature lye;
Chese he, for me, whether he wol lyve or dye.

RYERAGUS, with beele and greet
honour,
As he that was of chivalrie the flour,
Is comen hoom, and othere worthy
men.

O blisful artow now, thou Dorigen!
That hast thy lusty housbonde in thine armes,
The fresche knyght, the worthy man of armes,
That loveth thee, as his owene hertes lyf.
Nothyng list hym to been ymaginatyf
If any wight had spoke, whil he was oute,
To hire of love; he hadde of it no doute.
He noght entendeth to no swich mateere,
But daunceth, justeth, maketh hire good cheere;
And thus in joye and blisse I lete hem dwelle,
And of the sike Aurelius wol I telle.

In langour and in torment furys,
Two yer and moore lay wrecche
Aurelius,
Er any foot he myghte on erthe gon;
Ne confort in this tyme hadde he
noon.

Save of his brother, which that was a clerk;
He knew of al this wo and al this werk.
for to noon oother creature certeyn
Of this matere he dorste no word seyn.
Under his brest he baar it moore secrete
Than evere dide Pamphilus for Galathee.
His brest was hool, withoute for to sene,
But in his herte ay was the arwe kene;
And wel ye knowe that of a sursanure
In surgerye is perilous the cure,
But men myghte touche the arwe, or come thereby.

Is brother weep and wayled pryvely,
Til atte laste hym fil in remembraunce
That whiles he was at Orlens in fraunce.
As yonge clerkes, that been lykerous
To reden artes that been curiours,



Seken in every halke and every herne
Particular sciences for to lerne,
He hym remembred, that upon a day,
At Orlens in studie a book he say
Of magyk natureel, which his felawe,
That was that time a bachelour of lawe,
Hl were he ther to lerne another craft,
Hadde prively upon his desk yast;
Which book spak muchel of the operaciouns
Touchyng the eighte and twenty mansiouns
That longen to the moone, and swich folye,
As in cure dayes is nat worth a flye;
for hooly chirches feith in oure bileve,
Ne suffreth noon illusion us to greve.
And whan this book was in his remembraunce,
Anon for joye his herte gan to daunce,
And to hymself he seyde pryvely:

My brother shal be warissshed hastily;
for I am siker that ther be sciences
By whiche men make diverse apparences,
Swiche as thise subtil tregetoures pleye.
for ofte at feestes have I wel herd seye,
That tregetours, withinne an halle large,
Have maad come in a water and a barge,
And in the halle rowen up and doun.
Sometyme hath semed come a grym leoun;
And somtyme floures sprynge as in a mede;
Sometyme a vyne, and grapes white and rede;

Sometyme a castel, al of lym and stoon;
And whan hym lyked, voyded it anon.
Thus semed it to every mannes sighte.
Now thanne conclude I thus, that if I myghte
At Orlens som oold felawe yfynde,
That hadde this moones mansiouns in mynde,
Or oother magyk natureel above,
He sholde wel make my brother han his love.
for with an apparence a clerk may make
To mannes sighte, that alle the rokkes blake
Of Britaigne weren yvoyded everichon,
And shippes by the brynke comen and gon,
And in swich forme endure a wowke or two.
Thanne were my brother warissshed of his wo.
Thanne moste she nedes holden hire biheste,
Or elles he shal shame hire atte leeste.

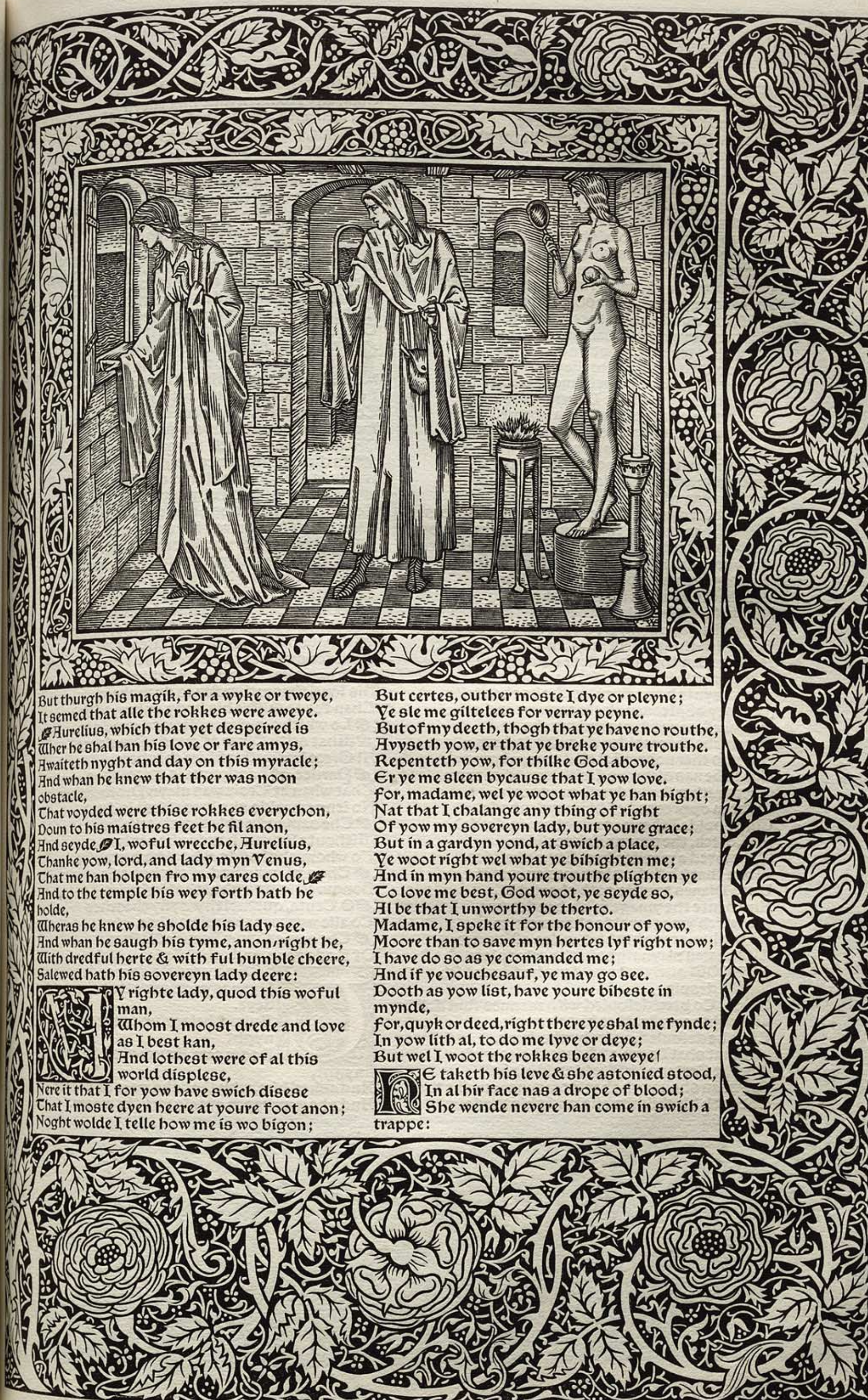
What sholde I make a lenger tale of
this?
Unto his brotheres bed he comen is,
And swich confort he yaf hym for to gon
To Orlens, that he up sterte anon,
And on his wey forthward thanne is he fare,
In hope for to been lissed of his care.
Whan they were come almoost to that
citee,
But if it were a two furlong or thre,
A yong clerk romynge by hymself they mette
Which that in Latyn thriftily hem grette,

And after that he seyde a wonder thyng:
I knowe, quod he, the cause of youre comyng.
And er they ferther any foote wente,
He tolde hem al that was in hire entente.
This Briton clerk hym asked of felawes
The whiche that he had knowe in olde dawes;
And he answerde hym that they dede were,
for which he weep ful ofte many a teere.
Doun of his hors Aurelius lighte anon,
And forth with this magicien is he gon
hoom to his hous, and made hem wel at ese.
Hem lakked no vitaille that myghte hem please;
So wel arrayed hous as ther was oon
Aurelius in his lyf saugh nevere noon.
He shewed hym, er he wente to sopeer,
forestes, parkes ful of wilde deer;
Ther saugh he hertes with hir hornes hye,
The gretteste that evere were seyn with eye.
He saugh of hem an hondred slayn with houndes,
And somme with arwes blede of bittre woundes.
He saugh, whan voyded were these wilde deer,
Thise fauconers upon a fair ryver,
That with hir hawkes han the heroun slayn.
Ther saugh he knyghtes justyng in a playn;
And after this, he dide hym swich plesaunce,
That he hym shewed his lady on a daunce,
On which hymself he daunced, as hym thoughte.
And whan this maister, that this magyk wroughte,
Saugh it was tyme, he clapte his handes two,
And, farewell! al oure revel was ago.
And yet remoeved they nevere out of the hous,
Whil they saugh al this sighte merveillous,
But in his studie, theras his bookes be,
They seten stille, and no wight but they thre.
O hym this maister called his squier,
And seyde hym thus: Is redy oure soper?
Almoost an houre it is, I undertake,
Sith I yow bad oure soper for to make,
Whan that this worthy men wenten with me
Into my studie, theras my bookes be.
Sire, quod this squier, whan it liketh yow,
It is al redy, though ye wol right now.
Go we thanne soupe, quod he, as for the beste;
This amorous folk som tyme moote han hir reste.
After soper fille they in tretee
What somme sholde this maistres
guerdon be,
To remoeven alle the rokkes of Britayne,
And eek from Gerounde to the mouth of Sayne.
He made it straunge, and swoor, so God hym
save!
Lasse than a thousand pound he wolde nat have,
Ne gladly for that somme he wolde nat goon.
Aurelius, with blisful herte anon,
Answerde thus: fy on a thousand pound!
This wyde world, which that men seye is
round,
I wolde it yewe, if I were lord of it!
This bargayn is ful dryve, for we been knyht.
Ye shal be payed trewely, by my trouthe!
But looketh now, for no negligence or slouthe,
Ye tarie us heere no lenger than tomorwe.
Nay, quod this clerk, have heer my feith to borwe.

O bedde is goon Aurelius whan hym leste,
And wel ny al that nyght he hadde his reste.
What for his labour and his hope of blisse,
His woful herte of penaunce hadde a lisse.
Upon the morwe, whan that it was day,
To Britaigne tooke they the righte way,
Aurelius, and this magicien bisyde;
And been descended ther they wolde abyde;
And this was, as thise bookes me remembre,
The colde frosty season of Decembre.

HEBAS wex old, and hewed lyk
latoun,
That in his boote declynacioun
Shoon as the burned gold with
stremes bryghte;
But now in Capricorn adoun he

lighte,
Wheras he shoon ful pale, I dar wel seyn.
The bittre frostes, with the sleet and reyn,
Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd.
Janus sit by the fyr, with double berd,
And drynketh of his bugle/horn the wyn.
Biforn hym stant brawn of the tusked swyn,
And Nowel crieth every lusty man.
Aurelius, in al that evere he kan,
Dooth to his maister chiere and reverence,
And preyeth hym to doon his diligence
To bryngen hym out of his peynes smerte,
Or with a swerd that he wolde slitte his herte.
This subtil clerk swich routhe had of this man,
That nyght and day he spedde hym that he kan,
To wayten a tyme of his conclusioun;
This is to seye, to maken illusioun,
By swich an apparence or jogelrye,
Ine kan no termes of astrologye,
That she and every wight sholde wene and seye,
That of Britaigne the rokkes were aweye,
Or ellis they were sonken under grounde.
So atte laste he hath his tyme yfounde
To maken his japes and his wrecchednesse
Of swich a superstitious cursednesse.
His tables Tolletanes forth he brought,
ful wel corrected, ne ther lakked nought,
Neither his collect, ne his expans yeeris,
Ne his rootes, ne his othere geeris,
As been his centris and his arguments,
And his proporcionels convenientis
for his equacions in every thyng.
And, by his eighte speere in his wirkyng,
He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was shove
fro the heed of thilke fixe Hries above,
That in the ninthe speere considered is;
ful subtilly he kalkuled al this.
Whan he hadde founde his firste mansioun,
He knew the remenaunt by porporcioun;
And knew the arisyng of his moone weel,
And in whos face, and terme, and everydeel;
And knew ful weel the moones mansioun
Acordaunt to his operacioun;
And knew also his othere observaunces
for swiche illusiouns & swiche meschaunces
As bethen folk useden in thilke dayes;
for which no lenger maketh he delays;



But thurgh his magik, for a wyke or tweye,
It seemed that alle the rokkes were aweye.
Aurelius, which that yet despeired is
Wher he shal han his love or fare amys,
Awaiteth nyght and day on this myracle;
And whan he knew that ther was noon
obstacle,
That voyded were these rokkes everychon,
Doun to his maistres feet he fil anon,
And seyde: O I, woful wrecche, Aurelius,
Chanke yow, lord, and lady myn Venus,
That me han holpen fro my cares colde,
And to the temple his wey forth hath he
holde,
Wheras he knew he sholde his lady see.
And whan he saugh his tyme, anon right he,
With dredful herte & with ful humble cheere,
Salewed hath his sovereyn lady deere:

Righte lady, quod this woful
man,
Whom I moost drede and love
as I best kan,
And lothest were of al this
world displese,
Nere it that I for yow have swich disese
That I moste dyen heere at youre foot anon;
Noght wolde I telle how me is wo bigon;

But certes, outhere moste I dye or pleyne;
Ye sle me gylteles for verray peyne.
But of my deeth, though that ye have no routhe,
Hyyseth yow, er that ye breke youre trouthe.
Repenteth yow, for thilke God above,
Er ye me sleen bycause that I yow love.
for, madame, wel ye woot what ye han bight;
Nat that I chalange any thing of right
Of yow my sovereyn lady, but youre grace;
But in a gardyn yond, at swich a place,
Ye woot right wel what ye bihighten me;
And in myn hand youre trouthe pligheten ye
To love me best, God woot, ye seyde so,
Al be that I unworthy be therto.
Madame, I speke it for the honour of yow,
Moore than to save myn hertes lyf right now;
I have do so as ye comanded me;
And if ye vouchesauf, ye may go see.
Dooth as yow list, have youre bihesten in
mynde,
for, quyk or deed, right there ye shal me fynde;
In yow lith al, to do me lyve or deye;
But wel I woot the rokkes been aweye!
He taketh his leve & she astonied stood,
In al hir face nas a drope of blood;
She wende nevere han come in swich a
trappe:

¶ **A**llas! quod she, that ever this sholde
happe!
for wende I nevere, by possibilitee,
That swich a monstre or mervelle myghte be!
It is agayns the proces of nature:
¶ And hoom she goth a sorweful creature,
for verray feere unnethe may she go,
She wepeth, wailleth, al a day or two,
And swowneth, that it routhe was to see;
But why it was, to no wight tolde shee,
for out of towne was goon Arveragus.
But to herself she spak, and seyde thus,
With face pale and with ful sorweful cheere,
In hire compleynt, as ye shal after heere.
¶ **A**llas! quod she, on thee, fortune, I pleyne,
That unwar wrapped hast me in thy cheyne;
for which, tescap, woot I no socour,
Save oonly deeth or elles dishonour;
Oon of these two bihoveth me to chese.
But natheles, yet have I levere to lese
My lif than of my body have a shame,
Or knowe myselfen fals, or lese my name;
And with my deth I may be quyt, ywis.
Hath ther nat many a noble wyf, er this,
And many a mayde, yslayn herself, alas!
Rather than with hir body doon trespas?
¶ **I**s, certes, lo, these stories beren witnesse;
¶ When thretty tiraunts, ful of cursednesse,
Hadde slayn Phidoun in Athens, atte feste,
They commanded his doghtres for tarest,
And bryngen hem biforn hem in despit
Al naked, to fulfillen hir foul delit,
And in hir fadres blood they made hem daunce
Upon the pavement, God yeve hem myschaunce!
for which these woful maydens, ful of drede,
Rather than they wolde lese hir maydenhede
They prively been stirt into a welle,
And dreynte hemselven, as the bookes telle.
¶ They of Messene leete enquire and seke
Of Lacedomye fifty maydens eke,
On whiche they wolden doon hir lecherye;
But was ther noon of al that compaignye
That she nas slayn, and with a good entente
Chees rather for to dye than assente
To been oppressed of hir maydenhede.
Why sholde I thanne to dye been in drede?
¶ **L**o, eek, the tiraunt Aristocles,
That loved a mayden heet Stymphalides,
When that hir fader slayn was on a nyght,
Unto Dianas temple goth she right,
And hente the ymage in hir handes two,
fro which ymage wolde she nevere go:
No wight ne myghte hir handes of it arace
Til she was slayn right in the selve place.
¶ **O**W sith that maydens hadden swich
despit
To been defouled with mannes foul delit,
Wel oghte a wyf rather hemselven slee
Than be defouled, as it thynketh me.
¶ What shal I seyn of Hasdrubales wyf,
That at Cartage birafted herself hir lyf?
for whan she saugh that Romayns wan the toun,
She took hir children alle, and skipte adoun

Into the fyr, and chees rather to dye
Than any Romayn dide hire vileynye.
¶ Hath nat Lucesse yslayn herself, alas!
At Rome, whan that she oppressed was
Of Carquyn, for hire thoughte it was a shame
To lyven whan she hadde lost hir name?
¶ The sevene maydens of Melesie, also,
han slayn hemself, for verray drede and wo,
Rather than folk of Gawle hem sholde oppresse.
Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,
Koude I now telle as touchynge this mateere.
¶ When Habradate was slayn, his wyf so deere
Hirselven slow, and leet hir blood to glyde
In Habradates woundes depe and wyde,
And seyde, My body, at the leeste way,
Ther shal no wight defoulen, if I may.
¶ **W**hat sholde I mo ensamples heere of sayn,
Sith that so manye han hemselven slayn
Wel rather than they wolde defouled be?
I wol conclude, that it is bet for me
To sleen myself, than been defouled thus.
I wol be trewe unto Arveragus,
Or rather sleen myself in som manere,
¶ As dide Demociones doghter deere,
Bycause that she wolde nat defouled be.
¶ **O** Cedarus! it is ful greet pitee
To reden how thy doghtren deyde, alas!
That slowe hemselven for swich maner cas.
¶ As greet a pitee was it, or wel moore,
The Cheban mayden, that for Nichanore
Hirselven slow, right for swich manere wo.
¶ Another Cheban mayden dide right so;
for oon of Macidoyn hadde hire oppressed,
She with hir deeth hir maydenhede redressed.
¶ What shal I seye of Nicerates wyf,
That for swich cas birafted herself hir lyf?
¶ How trewe eek was to Alcebiades
his love, that rather for to dyen chees
Than for to suffre his body unburyed be?
¶ **L**o which a wyf was Alceste, quod she,
¶ What seith Omer of goode Penelope?
Al Grece knoweth of hire chastitee.
¶ Pardee, of Laodomya is writen thus,
That whan at Troie was slayn Protheselaus,
No lenger wolde she lyve after his day.
¶ The same of noble Porcia telle I may;
Withoute Brutus koude she nat lyve,
To whom she hadde al hool hir herte yive.
¶ The parfit wyfhod of Arthemisie
Honoured is thurgh al the Barbarie.
¶ **O** Teuta, queene! thy wyfly chastitee
To alle wyves may a mirour bee.
¶ The same thyng I seye of Bilyea,
Of Rodogone, and eek Valeria.
¶ **H**US pleynd Dorigene a day or tweye,
Purposynge evere that she wolde
deye.
But natheles, upon the thridde
nyght
Hoom cam Arveragus, this worthy
knyght,
And asked hire, why that she weep so soore;
And she gan wepen ever lenger the moore.



¶ **A**llas! quod she, that ever I was born!
Thus have I seyd, quod she, thus have I
sworn.
¶ And toold hym al as ye han herd bifore;
It nedeth nat reherce it yow namoore.
This housbonde, with glad chiere, in frendly
wyse,
Answerde and seyde as I shal yow devyse:
¶ Is ther oght elles, Dorigen, but this?
¶ Nay, nay, quod she, God help me so, as
ywis!
This is to muche, and it were Goddes wille.
¶ Ye, wyf, quod he, lat sleepen that is stille;
It may be wel, paraventure, yet today.
Ye shul youre trouthe holden, by my fay!
for God so wisy have mercy upon me,
I hadde wel levere ystiked for to be,
for verray love which that I to yow have,
But if ye sholde youre trouthe kepe and save!
Trouthe is the hyeste thyng that man may
kepe:
¶ **W**IT with that word he brast anon to
wepe,
And seyde, I yow forbode, uppeyne of
deeth,
That nevere, whil thee lasteth lyf ne breeth,
To no wight tel thou of this aventure.

As I may best, I wol my wo endure,
Ne make no contenance of hevynesse,
That folk of yow may demen harm or gesse.
¶ **A**ND forth he cleped a squier & a mayde:
Gooth forth anon with Dorigen, he
sayde,
And bryngeth hire to swich a place anon.
¶ They take hir leve, and on hir wey they gon;
But they ne wiste why she thider wente.
He nolde no wight tellen his entente.
¶ **A**RAVENTURE an heep of yow,
ywis,
¶ Wol holden hym a lewed man in this,
That he wol putte his wyf in jupartie;
Herkeneth the tale, er ye upon hir crie.
Shemay have bettre fortune than yow semeth;
And whan that ye han herd the tale, demeth.
¶ **H**IS squier, which that highte Aurelius,
On Dorigen that was so amorous,
Of aventure happed hire to meete
Amydde the toun, right in the quykkest
strete,
As she was boun to goon the wey forthright
Toward the gardyn theras she had hight;
And he was to the gardynward also;
for wel he spyed, whan she wolde go
Out of hir hous to any maner place.



But thus they mette, of aventure or grace;
And he saleweth hire with glad entente,
And asked of hire whiderward she wente.
And she answerde, half as she were mad,
Unto the gardyn, as myn housbonde bad,
My trouthe for to holde, alas! alas!

AURELIUS gan wondren on this cas,
And in his herte hadde greet com-
passioun
Of hire and of hire lamentacioun,
And of Arveragus, the worthy knyght,
That bad hire holden al that she had bight,
So looth hym was his wyf sholde breke hir
trouthe;
And in his herte he caughte of this greet
routhe,
Considerynge the beste on every syde,
That fro his lust yet were hym levere abyde,
Than doon so heigh a cherlyssh wretched-
nesse

Agayns franchise and alle gentillesse;
For which in fewe wordes seyde he thus:

MADAME, seyeth to youre lord,
Arveragus,
That sith I se his grete gentillesse
To yow, and eek I se wel youre distresse,

That him were levere han shame, and that
were routhe,
Than ye to me sholde breke thus youre
trouthe,
I have wel levere evere to suffre wo,
Than I departe the love bitwix yow two.
I yow relese, madame, into youre hond
Quyt every surement and every bond,
That ye han maad to me as heer biforn,
Sith thilke tyme which that ye were born.
My trouthe I plighte, I shal yow never repreve
Of no biheste, and heere I take my leve,
As of the treweste and the beste wyf
That evere yet I knew in al my lyf.
But every wyf be war of hire biheeste,
On Dorigene remembreth atte leeste.
Thus kan a squier doon a gentil dede,
As wel as kan a knyght, withouten drede.

SHE thonketh hym upon hir knees al
bare,
And hoom unto hir housbonde is she
fare,
And tolde hym al as ye han herd me sayd;
And be ye siker, he was so weel apayd
That it were impossible me to wryte.
What sholde I lenger of this cas endyte?

Arveragus and Dorigene his wyf
In sovereyn blisse leden forth hir lyf.
Nevere eft ne was ther angre hem bitwene;
He cherisseth hire as though she were a
queene;
And she was to hym trewe for everemoore.
Of thise two folk ye gete of me namoore.

AURELIUS, that his cost hath al
forlorn,
Curseth the tyme that evere he
was born:
Alas! quod he, alas! that I
bihihte

Of pure gold a thousand pound of wighte
Unto this philosophre! How shal I do?
I se namoore but that I am fordo.
Myn heritage moot I nedes selle,
And been a begger; heere may I nat dwelle,
And shamen al my kynrede in this place,
But I of hym may gete bettre grace.
But nathelees, I wol of hym assaye,
At certeyn dayes, yeer by yeer, to paye,
And thanke hym of his grete curteisye;
My trouthe wol I kepe, I wol nat lye.
With herte soor he gooth unto his cofre,
And broghte gold unto this philosophre,
The value of fyve hundred pound, I gesse,
And hym biscecheth, of his gentillesse,
To graunte hym dayes of the remenaunt,
And seyde, Maister, I dar wel make avaunt,
I failed nevere of my trouthe as yit;
For sikerly my dette shal be quyit
Towardes yow, howeever that I fare
To goon a begged in my kirtle bare.
But wolde ye vouchesauf, upon seuretee,
Two yeer or thre for to respiten me,
Thanne were I wel; for elles moot I selle
Myn heritage; ther is namoore to telle.

HIS philosophre sobrelly answerde
And seyde thus, whan he these wordes
herde:

Have I nat holden covenant unto thee?
Yes, certes, wel and trewely, quod he.
Hastow nat had thy lady as thee liketh?
No, no, quod he, and sorwefully he siketh.
What was the cause? tel me if thou kan.
Aurelius his tale anon bigan,
And tolde hym al, as ye han herd bifoore;
It nedeth nat to yow rehce it moore.

HE seyde, Arveragus, of gentillesse,
Hadde levere dye in sorwe and in distresse
Than that his wyf were of hir trouthe
fals.

The sorwe of Dorigene he tolde hym als,
How looth hire was to been a wikked wyf,
And that she levere had lost that day hir lyf,
And that hir trouthe she swoor, thurgh in-
nocence:

She nevere erst herde speke of apparence;
That made me han of hire so greet pitee.
And right as frely as he sente hire me,
As frely sente I hire to hym ageyn.
This al and som, ther is namoore to seyn.

HIS philosophre answerde, Leeve
brother,
Everich of yow dide gentilly til
oother.
Thou art a squier, and he is a
knyght;

But God forbode, for his blisful myght,
But if a clerk koude doon a gentil dede
As wel as any of yow, it is no drede.
Sire, I relese thee thy thousand pound,
As thou right now were copen out of the ground,
Ne nevere er now ne haddest knowen me.
For sire, I wol nat taken a peny of thee
for al my craft, ne noght for my travaille.
Thou hast ypayed wel for my vitaille;
It is ynogh, and farewel, have good day!
And took his hors, and forth he goth his way.
Lordynges, this question wolde I aske now,
Which was the mooste fre, as thynketh yow?
Now telleth me, er that ye ferther wende.
I kan namoore, my tale is at an ende.

Heere is ended the Frankelene's Tale.

The prologe of the Seconde Nonnes Tale.

THE ministre & the norice unto vices,
Which that men clepe in Englissh
ydelnesse,
That porter of the gate is of delices,
To eschue, and by hire contrarie hire
opprese,
That is to seyn, by lecherful bisynesse,
Wel oghten we to doon al oure entente,
Lest that the feend thurgh ydelnesse us hente.

For he, that with his thousand cordes slye
Continuelly us waiteth to biclappe,
Whan he may man in ydelnesse espye,
He kan so lightly cacche hym in his trappe,
Til that a man be hent right by the lappe,
He nys nat war the feend hath hym in honde;
Wel oghte us werche, and ydelnesse withstonde.

And though men dradden nevere for to dye,
Yet seen men wel by resoun douteles,
That ydelnesse is roten slogardye,
Of which ther nevere comth no good encrees;
And seen, that slouthe it holdeth in a lees
Oonly to slepe, and for to ete and drynke,
And to devouren al that othere swynke.

And for to putte us fro swich ydelnesse,
That cause is of so greet confusioun,
I have heer doon my feithful bisynesse,
After the legende, in translatioun,
Right of thy glorious lif and passioun,
Thou with thy gerland wrought of rose and lilie,
Thee, meene I, mayde and martir, Seynt Cecile!

Invocacio ad Mariam.

AND thou that flour of virgines art
alle,
Of whom that Bernard list so wel
to write,
To thee, at my bigynnyng, first I
calle;

The
Seconde
Nonnes
Tale

Thou confort of us wrecches, do me endite
Thy maydens deeth, that wan thurgh hire merite
The eterneel lyf, and of the feend victorie,
As man may after reden in hire storie.

Thow mayde and mooder, doghter of thy sone,
Thow welle of mercy, synful soules cure,
In whom that God, for bountee, chees to wone,
Thow humble, and heigh over every creature,
Thow nobledest so ferforth oure nature,
That no desdeyn the Makere hadde of kynde,
His sone in blood and flessch to clothe and wynde.

Withinne the cloistre blisful of thy sydis
Took mannes shap the eterneel love and pees,
That of the tryne compas lord and gyde is,
Whom erthe, and see, and hevne, out of relees,
Hy heren; and thou, virgine wemmelees,
Baar of thy body, and dweltest mayden pure,
The creatour of every creature.

Assembled is in thee magnificence,
With mercy, goodnesse, and with swich pitee,
That thou, that art the sonne of excellence,
Nat oonly helpest hem that preyen thee,
But often tyme, of thy benygnytee,
ful frely, er that men thyn help biseche,
Thou goost biforn, and art hir lyves leche.

NOW help, thow meeke and blisful faire
mayde,
Me, flemed wrecche, in this desert of galle;
Thynk on the womman Cananee, that sayde
That whelpes eten somme of the crommes alle
That from hir lordes table been yfalle;
And though that I, unworthy sone of Eve,
Be synful, yet accepte my bileve.

And, for that feith is deed withouten werkis,
So for to werken yif me wit and space,
That I be quit fro thennes that moost derk is.
O thou, that art so fair and ful of grace,
Be myn advocat in that heighe place
Theras withouten ende is songe Osanne,
Thow Cristes mooder, doghter deere of Anne!

And of thy light my soule in prison lighte,
That troubled is by the contagioun
Of my body, and also by the wighte
Of erthely lust and fals affeccoun;
O havene of refut, O salvacioun
Of hem that been in sorwe and in distresse,
Now help, for to my werk I wol me dresse!

Yet preye I yow that reden that I write,
forve me, that I do no diligence
This ilke storie subtilly to endite;
for bothe have I the wordes and sentence
Of hym that at the seintes reverence
The storie wroot, and folwen hire legende,
I pray yow that ye wole my werk amende.

*Interpretacio nominis Cecilie, quam ponit frater
Jacobus Januensis in Legenda Aurea.*

FIRST wolde I yow the name of
Seinte Cecilie
Expowne, as men may in hir
storie see,
It is to seye in English hevenes
lilie,

for pure chaastnesse of virginitee;
Or, for she whitenesse hadde of honestee,
And grene of conscience, and of good fame
The soote savour, Lilie was hir name;

Or Cecile is to seye The wey to blynde,
for she ensample was by good techynge;
Or elles Cecile, as I writen fynde,
Is joynd, by a manere conjoynynge
Of hevne and Lia, and heere, in figuryng,
The hevne is set for thought of hoolynesse,
And Lia for hire lastynge bisynesse.

Cecile may eek be seyde in this manere;
Wantynge of blyndnesse, for hir grete light
Of sapience, and for hire thewes cleere;
Or elles, loo! this maydens name bright
Of hevne and Leos comth, for which by right
Men myghte hire wel, The hevne of peple, calle,
Ensampler of goode and wise werkes alle.

for, Leos, Deple in English is to seye,
And right as men may in the hevne see
The sonne and moone and sterres every weye,
Right so men goostly, in this mayden free,
Seyen of feith the magnanymytee,
And eek the cleernesse hool of sapience,
And sondry werkes, brighte of excellence.

And right so as thise philosophres write
That hevne is swift and round & eek brennyng,
Right so was faire Cecilie the white
ful swift and bisy evere in good werkynge,
And round and hool in good perseverynge,
And brennyng evere in charite ful brighte;
Now have I yow declared what she highte.
Explicit.

HEERE BIGYNNETH THE SECONDE NONNES TALE OF THE
LYF OF SEINTE CECILE

THIS mayden bright
Cecile, as hir lif seith,
Was comen of Ro-
mayns, & of noble kynde,
And from hir cradel up-
fostred in the feith
Of Crist, and bar his
gospel in hir mynde;
She nevere cessed, as I
writen fynde,
Of hir preyere, and God to love and drede,
Bischyng hym to kepe hir maydenhede.

And whan this mayden sholde unto a man
Wedded be, that was ful yong of age,
Whiche that ycleped was Valerian,
And day was comen of hir mariage,
She, ful devout and humble in hire corage,
Under hir robe of gold, that sat ful faire,
Hadde next hire flessch yclad hire in an haire.

And whil the orgues maden melodie,
To God alone in herte thus sang she:
O Lord, my soule and eek my body gye
Unwedmed, lest that I confounded be;
And, for his love that deyde upon a tree,
Every secunde or thridde day she faste,
Hy biddynge in hire orisons ful faste.

The nyght cam, and to bedde moste she gon
With hire housbonde, as ofte is the manere,
And pryvely to hym she seyde anon,
O sweete and wel-biloved spouse deere,
Ther is a conseil, and ye wolde it heere,
Whiche that right fayn I wolde unto yow seye,
So that ye swere ye shul me nat biwreye.

Valerian gan faste unto hire swere
That for no cas, ne thyng that myghte be,
He sholde neveremo biwreyn here;
And thanne at erst to hym thus seyde she:
I have an angel which that loveth me,
That with greet love, wherso I wake or
sleepe,
Is redy ay my body for to kepe.

And if that he may feelen, out of drede,
That ye me touche or love in vileynye,
He right anon wol sle yow with the dede,
And in youre yowthe thus ye sholden dye;
And if that ye in clene love me gye,
He wol yow loven as me, for youre clennessse,
And shewen yow his joye and his brightnesse.

Valerian, corrected as God wolde,
Answerde agayn, If I shal trusten thee
Lat me that angel se, and hym biholde;
And if that it a verray angel bee,
Thanne wol I doon as thou hast prayed me;

And if thou love another man, forsothe,
Right with this swerd thanne wol I sle yow
bothe.

CECILE answerde anon right in this
wise:
If that yow list, the angel shul ye see,
So that ye trowe on Crist, and yow baptize.
Gooth forth to Via Apia, quod shee,
That fro this toun ne stant but miles three,
And, to the povre folkes that ther dwelle
Sey hem right thus, as that I shal yow telle.

Tell hem that I, Cecile, yow to hem sente,
To shewen yow the goode Urban the olde,
for secree thynges, and for good entente.
And whan that ye Seint Urban han biholde,
Telle hym the wordes whiche I to yow tolde;
And whan that he hath purged yow fro synne,
Thanne shul ye se that angel, er ye twynne.

VALERIAN is to the place ygon,
And right as hym was taught by
his lernynge,
He foond this hooly olde Urban
anon,
Among the seintes buryeles
lotynge.

And he anon, withouten taryng,
Dide his message; and whan that he it tolde,
Urban for joye his handes gan upholde;

The teeris from his eyen leet he falle:
O myghty Lord! O Jhesu Crist, quod he,
Sower of chast conseil, hierde of us alle,
The fruyt of thilke seed of chastitee
That thou hast sowe in Cecile, taak to thee!
Lo, lyk a bisy bee, withouten gile,
Thee serveth ay thyn owene thral Cecile!

for thilke spouse, that she took right now
ful lyk a fiers leoun, she sendeth heere,
As meke as evere was any lamb, to yow.
And with that word, anon ther gan appere
An oold man, clad in white clothes cleere,
That hadde a book with lettre of gold in
honde,
And gan biforn Valerian to stonde.

Valerian as deed fil down for drede
Whan he hym saugh, & he up hente hym tho,
And on his book right thus he gan to rede:
Oo Lord, oo feith, oo God, withouten mo;
Oo Cristendom, and fader of alle also,
Aboven alle, and over al everywhere,
Thise wordes al with gold ywriten were.

Whan this was rad, thanne seyde this olde
man,
Levestow this thyng or no? Sey ye or nay.

I leue al this thyng, quod Valerian,
For sother thyng than this, I dar wel say,
Under the hevene no wight thynke may.
The varysshed this olde man, he nyste where,
And Pope Urban hym cristened right there.

VALERIAN gooth hoom and fynt Cecilie
Withinne his chambre with an angel
stonde;

This angel hadde of roses and of lilie
Corones two, the which he bar in honde;
And first to Cecilie, as I understonde,
He yaf that oon, and after gan he take
That oother to Valerian, hir make.

With body clene, and with unwemmed thought,
Kepeth ay wel these coronas, quod he;
fro Paradys to yow have I hem broght,
Ne nevere mo ne shal they roten bee,
Ne lese hir soote savour, trusteth me;
Ne nevere wight shal seen hem with his eye,
But he be chaast and hate vileynye.

And thou, Valerian, for thou so soone
Assentedest to good conseil also,
Sey what thee list, and thou shalt han thy boone.
I have a brother, quod Valerian tho,
That in this world I love no man so.
I pray yow that my brother may han grace
To knowe the trouthe, as I do in this place.

THE angel seyde, God liketh thy requeste,
And bothe, with the palm of martirdom,
Ye shullen come unto his blissful feste.

And with that word Tiburce his brother coom.
And whan that he the savour undermoom
Which that the roses and the lilies caste,
Withinne his herte he gan to wondre faste,

And seyde: I wondre, this tyme of the yeer,
Whennes that soote savour cometh so
Of rose and lilies that I smelle heer;
for though I hadde hem in myne handes two
The savour myghte in me no depper go.
The sweete smel that in myn herte I fynde
Hath chaunged me al in another kynde.

VALERIAN seyde, Two coronas han we,
Snow-white and rose-reed, that shynen
cleere,

Whiche that thine eyen han no myght to see;
And as thou smellest hem thurgh my preyere,
So shaltow seen hem, leue brother deere,
If it so be thou wolt, withouten slouthe,
Bileve aright and known verray trouthe.

TIBURCE answerde: Seistow this to me
In soothnesse, or in dreem I herkne this?
In dremes, quod Valerian, han we be
Unto this tyme, brother myn, ywis;
But now at erst in trouthe our dwellyng is.
How woostow this, quod Tiburce, in what
wyse?

Quod Valerian: That shal I thee devyse.

The aungel of God hath me the trouthe ytaught
Which thou shalt seen, if that thou wolt reneye
The ydoles and be clene, and elles naught.
And of the myracle of these coronas tweye,
Seint Ambrose in his preface list to seye;
Solempnely this noble doctour deere
Commendeth it, and seith in this manere:

The palm of martirdom for to receyve
Seinte Cecilie, fulfild of Goddes yifte,
The world and eek hire chambre gan she weye;
Witnessse Tyburces and Valerians shifte,
To which God of his bountee wolde shifte
Corones two of floures wel smellynge,
And made his angel hem the coronas brynge:

The mayde hath broght these men to blisse above,
The world hath wist what it is worth, certeyn,
Devocioun of chastitee to love.

Tho shewed hym Cecilie, at open and pleyn,
That alle ydoles nys but a thyng in veyn;
for they been dombe, and therto they been deye,
And charged hym his ydoles for to leve.

THOSO that troweth nat this, a beest he is,
Quod tho Tiburce, if that I shal nat lye,
And she gan kisse his brest, that herde
this,

And was ful glad he koude trouthe espye.
This day I take thee for myn allye,
Seyde this blissful faire mayde, deere;
And after that she seyde as ye may here:

Lo, right so as the love of Crist, quod she,
Made me thy brotheres wyf, right in that wise
Anon for myn allye heer take I thee,
Syn that thou wolt thine ydoles despise.
Go with thy brother now, and thee baptise,
And make thee clene; so that thou mowe biholde
The anges face of which thy brother tolde.

TIBURCE answerde and seyde, Brother deere,
First tel me whider I shal, and to what man?
To whom? quod he, com forth with right
good cheere;

I wol thee lede unto the Pope Urban.
Til Urban? brother myn Valerian,
Quod tho Tiburce; woltow me thider lede?
Me thynketh that it were a wonder dede.

Ne menestow nat Urban, quod he tho,
That is so ofte dampned to be deed,
And woneth in halkes alwey to and fro,
And dar nat ones putte forth his heed?
Men sholde hym brennen in a fyr so reed
If he were founde, or that men myghte hym spy;
And we also, to bere hym compaignye;

And whil we seken thiske divinitee
That is yhid in hevne pryvely,
Algate ybrend in this world shul we be!
To whom Cecilie answerde boldly,
Men myghten dreden wel and skilfully

This lyf to lese, myne owene deere brother,
If this were lyvyng oonly and noon oother.

But ther is bettre lif in oother place,
That nevere shal be lost, ne drede thee noght,
Which Goddes sone us tolde thurgh his grace;
That fadres son hath alle thyng ywroght,
And al that wroght is with a skilful thought,
The Goost, that fro the fader gan procede,
Hath sowled hem, withouten any drede.

By word and by myracle Goddes sone,
Whan he was in this world, declared heere
That ther was oother lyf ther men may wone.
To whom answerde Tiburce, O suster deere,
Ne seydestow right now in this manere,
Ther nys but oo God, lord in soothfastnesse;
And now of three how maystow bere witnessse?

That shal I telle, quod she, er I go.
Right as a man hath sapienes three,
Memorie, engyn, and intellect also,
So in oo beyng of divinitee
Thre persones may ther right wel bee.
Tho gan she hym ful bisily to preche
Of Cristes come, and of his peynes teche,

And many pointes of his passioun;
How Goddes sone in this world was withholde,
To doon mankynde pleyn remissoun,
That was ybounde in synne and cares colde:
Al this thyng she unto Tiburce tolde.
And after this Tiburce, in good entente,
With Valerian to Pope Urban he wente,

That thanked God; and with glad herte and light
He cristned hym, and made hym in that place
Parfit in his lernynge, Goddes knyght.
And after this Tiburce gat swich grace,
That every day he saugh, in tyme and space,
The aungel of God; and every maner boone
That he God axed, it was sped ful soone.

Twere ful hard by ordre for to seyn
How manye wondres Jhesus for hem
wroghte;
But atte laste, to tellen short and pleyn,
The sergeants of the toun of Rome hem soghte,
And hem biforn Almache the Prefect broghte,
Which hem opposed, and knew al hire entente,
And to the ymage of Juppiter hem sente,

And seyde: Whoso wol nat sacrifice,
Swap of his heed; this my sentence heer!
Anon these martirs that I yow devyse,
Con Maximus, that was an officer
Of the Prefectes, and his cornicular,
Hem hente; and whan he forth the seintes ladde,
Hymself he weep, for pitee that he hadde.

Whan Maximus had herd the seintes loore,
He gat hym of the tormentours leve,
And ladde hem to his hous withoute moore,
And with hir prechyng, er that it were eve,

They gonnen fro the tormentours to reve,
And fro Maxime, and fro his folk echone,
The false feith, to trowe in God allone.

Cecilie cam, whan it was woxen nyght,
With preestes that hem cristned all yfeere;
And afterward, whan day was woxen light,
Cecile hem seyde with a ful stedefast cheere,
Now, Cristes owene knyghtes leue and deere,
Cast alle away the werkes of derknesse,
And armeth yow in armure of brightnesse.

Ye han, for sothe ydoon a greet bataille,
Youre cours is doon, youre feith han ye conserved,
Gooth to the corone of lyf that may nat faille;
The rightful Juge, which that ye han served,
Shal yeve it yow, as ye han it deserved.
And whan this thing was seyde as I devyse,
Men ledde hem forth to doon the sacrifice.

But whan they weren to the place broght,
To tellen shortly the conclusioun,
They nolde encense ne sacrifice right noght,
But on hir knees they setten hem adoun
With humble herte and sad devocioun,
And losten bothe hir hevendes in the place;
Hir soules wenten to the kyng of grace.

THIS Maximus, that saugh this thyng bityde,
With pitous teeris tolde it anon right,
That he hir soules saugh to hevne glyde
With aungels ful of cleernesse and of light,
And with his word converted many a wight;
for which Almachius dide hym so to bete,
With whippe of leed, til he the lif gan lete.

CECILE hym took, and buried hym anon
By Tiburce and Valerian softly,
Withinne hire buryng-place, under the stoon.
And after this Almachius hastily
Bad his ministres fecchen openly
Cecile, so that she myghte in his presence
Doon sacrifice, and Juppiter encense.

But they, converted at hir wise loore,
Wepten ful soore, and yaven ful credence
Unto hire word, and cryden moore and moore,
Crist, Goddes sone, withouten difference
Is verray God, this is al oure sentence,
That hath so good a servant hym to serve;
This with oo voys we trowen, thogh we sterve!

ALMACHIUS, that herde of this doynge,
Bad fecchen Cecilie, that he myghte hire see;
And alderfirst, lo! this was his axynge:
What maner womman artow? tho quod he.
I am a gentil womman born, quod she.
I axe thee, quod he, though it thee greve;
Of thy religioun and of thy bileve.

E han bigonne youre question folily,
Quod she, that wolden two answeres
conclude
In oo demande; ye axed lewedly.

Almache answerde unto that similitude,
Of whennes comth thyn answering so rude?
Of whennes? quod she, whan that she was freyned,
Of conscience and of good feith unfeyned.

Almachius seyde: Ne takestow noon heede
Of my power? And she answerde hym this:
Youre myght, quod she, ful litel is to dreede;
for every mortal mannes power nys
But lyke a bladdre, ful of wynd, ywys.
for with a needles point, whan it is blowe,
May al the boost of it be leyd ful lowe.

Wrofully bigonne thou, quod he,
And yet in wrong is thy perseveraunce;
Mostow nat how oure myghty princes free
Han thus comanded and maad ordinaunce,
That every cristen wight shal han penaunce
But if that he his cristendom withseye,
And goon al quit, if he wole it reneye?

OURE princes erren, as youre nobleye dooth,
Quod tho Cecile, and with a wood sentence
Ye make us gilty, and it is nat sooth;
for ye, that knowen wel oure innocence,
for as muche as we doon a reverence
To Crist, and for we bere a cristen name,
Ye putte on us a cryme, and eek a blame.

But we that knowen thilke name so
for vertuous, we may it not withseye.
Almache answerde, Cheesoon of thise two,
Do sacrifice, or cristendom reneye,
That thou mowe now escapen by that weye.
At which the hooly blisful faire mayde
Gan for to laughe, and to the juge sayde,

O juge, confus in thy nyctee,
Woltow that I reneye innocence,
To make me a wikked wight? quod she;
Lo! he dissymuleth heere in audience,
He stareth and woodeth in his advertence!
O whom Almachius, Unsely wrecche!
Ne woostow nat how far my myght may
strecche?

Han noght oure myghty princes to me yeven,
Ye, bothe power and auctoritee
To maken folk to dyen or to lyven?
Why spekestow so proudly thanne to me?
I speke noght but stedfastly, quod she,
Nat proudly, for I seye, as for my syde,
We haten deedly thilke vice of pryde.

And if thou drede nat a sooth to heere,
Channe wol I shewe al openly, by right,
That thou hast maad a ful gret lesyng heere.
Thou seyst, thy princes han thee yeven myght
Bothe for to sleen and for to quyken a wight;
Thou, that ne mayst but oonly lyfbireve,
Thou hast noon oother power, ne no leve!

But thou mayst seyn, thy princes han thee maked
Ministre of deeth; for if thou speke of mo,
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Thou lvest, for thy power is ful naked,
Do wey thy booldnesse! seyde Almachius tho,
And sacrifice to oure goddes, er thou go;
I recche nat what wrong that thou me profre,
for I can suffre it as a philosophe;

But thilke wronges may I nat endure
That thou spekest of oure goddes heere, quod he.
Cecile answerde, O nyce creature!
Thou seydest no word syn thou spak to me
That I ne knew therewith thy nyctee;
And that thou were, in every maner wise,
A lewed officer and a veyn justise!

Ther laketh nothyng to thyne outter eyen
That thou nart blynd, for thyng that we seen alle
That it is stoon, that men may well espyen,
That ilke stoon a god thou wolt it calle.
I rede thee, lat thyn hand upon it falle,
And taste it wel, and stoon thou shalt it fynde,
Syn that thou seest nat with thyne eyen blynde.

It is a shame that the peple shal
So scorne thee, and laughe at thy folye;
for comunly men woot it wel overal,
That myghty God is in his hevenes hye,
And thise ymages, wel thou mayst espye,
To thee, ne to himself, mowe noght profite,
for in effect they been nat worth a myte.

WISE wordes and swiche other seyde she;
And he weex wrooth, and bad men sholde hire
lede
Hom til hir hous. And in hire hous, quod he,
Brenne hire right in a bath of flambe rede,
And as he bad, right so was doon in dede;
for in a bath they gonne hire faste shetten,
And nyght and day greet fyre they under betten.

The longe nyght, and eek a day also,
for al the fyr and eek the bathes heete,
She sat al coold, and feeled no wo,
It made hire nat a drope for to sweete.
But in that bath hir lyf she moste lete;
for he, Almachius, with ful wikke entente
To sleen hire in the bath his sonde sente.

THRE strokes in the nekke he smoot hire tho,
The tormentour, but for no maner chaunce
He myghte noght smyte al hir nekke atwo;
And for ther was that tyme an ordinaunce,
That no man sholde doon men swich penaunce
The ferthe strook to smyten, softe or soore,
This tormentour ne dorste do namoore;

But half deed, with hir nekke ycorven there,
He lefte hir lyf, and on his wey is went.
The cristen folk, which that aboute hire were,
With sheetes han the blood ful faire yhent.
Thre dayes tyved she in this torment,
And never cessed hem the feith to teche;
That she hadde fostred, hem she gan to preche;

And hem she yaf hir moebles and hir thyng,
And to the Pope Urban bitook hem tho,
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And seyde, I axed this at hevene kyng,
To han respit thre dayes and namo,
To recomende to yow, er that I go,
Thise goles, lo! and that I myghte do werche
Here of myn hous perpetuelly a cherche.

SEINT URBAN, with his deknes, prively
The body fette, and buried it by nyghte
Among his other seintes honestly.
Hir hous the chirche of Seinte Cecile highte;
Seint Urban halwed it, as he wel myghte;
In which, into this day, in noble wyse,
Men doon to Crist and to his seinte servyse.
Here is ended the Seconde Nonnes Tale.

The prologe of the Chanons Yemannes Tale.
HAN toold was al the tyf
of Seinte Cecile,
Er we hadde riden fully
fye mile,
At Boghton under Blee
us gan atake
A man, that clothed was
in clothes blake,
And undermeth he wered
a surplis;

his hakeney, that was al pomely grys,
So swatte, that it wonder was to see;
It seemed as he had priked miles thre.
The hors eek that his Yeman rood upon
So swatte, that unnethe myghte it gon.
Aboute the peytrel stood the foom ful hye,
He was of foom al flekked as a pye.
A male tweyflood on his croper lay,
It seemed that he caried lite array.
Alight for somer rood this worthy man,
And in myn herte wondren I bigan
What that he was, til that I understood
How that his cloke was sowd to his hood;
for which, whan I hadde longe avysed me,
I demed hym som chanoun for to be.
His hat heeng at his bak down by a laas,
for he hadde riden moore than trot or paas;
he hadde ay priked lik as he were wood.
A cloteleef he hadde under his hood
for swoot, and for to kepe his heed from heete;
But it was joye for to seen hym swete!
his forheed dropped as a stillatorie
were ful of plantayne and of paritorie.
And whan that he was come, he gan to crye,
God save, quod he, this joly compaignye!
faste have I priked, quod he, for your sake,
Bycause that I wolde yow atake,
To riden in this myrie compaignye.
This yeman eek was ful of curteisye,
And seyde, Sires, now in the morwe/tyde,
Out of youre hostetrie I saugh you ryde,
And warned heer my lord and my soverayn,
Which that to ryden with yow is ful fayn
for his desport; he loveth daliaunce.
freend, for thy warnyng God yewe thee good
chaunce!
Channe seyde oure Hoost, for certes it wolde seme

Thy lord were wys, and so I may wel deme;
He is ful jocunde also, dar I leye.
Can he oght telle a myrie tale or tweye,
With which he glade may this compaignye?

HO, sire? my lord? ye, ye, withouten lye!
He kan of murthe, and eek of jolitee
Nat but ynough; also sire, trusteth me,
And ye hym knewe as wel as that do I,
Ye wolde wondre how wel and craftily
he koude werke, and that in sondry wise.
He hath take on hym many a greet emprise,
Which were ful hard for any that is heere
To brynge aboute, but they of hym it leere.
As hoome as he rit amonges yow,
If ye hym knewe, it wolde be for youre prow;
Ye wolde nat forgoon his aqueyntaunce
for muchel good, I dar leye in balaunce
Al that I have in my possessioun.
He is a man of heigh discrecioun;
I warne yow wel, he is a passyng man.

EL, quod oure Hoost, I pray thee tel me
than,
Is he a clerk or noon? Telle what he is.
Nay, he is gretter than a clerk, ywis,
seyde this yeman, and in wordes fewe,
Hoost, of his craft somewhat I wol yow shewe.
I seye, my lord kan swich subtilitee,
But al his craft ye may nat wite for me,
And som what helpe I yet to his wirkyng,
That al this ground on which we been ridyng,
Til that we come to Caunterbury toun,
he koude al clene turne it up/so/down,
And pave it al of silver and of gold.

AND whan this yeman hadde this tale ytold
Unto oure Hoost, he seyde, Benedicitee!
This thyng is wonder merveillous to me,
Syn that thy lord is of so heigh prudence,
Bycause of which men sholde hym reverence,
That of his worship reketh he so lite;
his overslope nys nat worth a myte,
As in effect, to hym, so moot I go!
It is al baudi and totore also.

Why is thy lord so sluttish, I the preye,
And is of power bettre clooth to beye,
If that his dede accorde with thy speche?
Telle me that, and that I thee biseche.

HY? quod this yeman, wherto axe ye me?
God help me so, for he shal nevere thee!
But I wol nat avowe that I seye,
And therefore keep it secree, I yow preye,
He is to wys, in feith, as I bileve;
That that is overdoon, it wol nat preeve
Aright, as clerkes seyn, it is a vice.
Wherfore in that I holde hym lewed and nyce,
for whan a man hath overgreet a wit,
ful of hym happeth to mysusen it;
So dooth my lord, and that me greveth soore.
God it amende! I kan sey yow namoore.

HEROF no fors, good yeman, quod oure
Hoost,
Syn of the konnyng of thy lord thou woost,
Telle how he dooth, I pray thee hertely,
Syn that he is so crafty and so sly.

Where dwellen ye, if it to telle be?

IN the suburbs of a town, quod he,
Lurkyng in hernes and in lanes blynde,
Wheras thise robbours and thise
theves by kynde,
Holden hir pryvee fereful residence,
As they that dar not shewen hir presence,
So faren we, if I shall seye the sothe.

Now, quod oure hoost, yit lat me talke to the;
Why artow so discoloured of thy face?
Peter! quod he, God yewe it harde grace,
I am so used in the fyr to blowe,
That it hath chaunged my colour, I trowe.
I am nat wont in no mirour to prie,
But swynke soore, and lerne multiplie.
We blondren evere, and pouren in the fir,
And for al that we faille of our desir,
for evere we lakken oure conclusioun.
To muchel folk we doon illusioun,
And borwe gold, be it a pound or two,
Or ten, or twelve, or manye sommes mo.
And make hem wenen, at the leeste weye,
That of a pound we koude make tweye!
Yet is it fals; but ay we han good hope
It for to doon, and after it we grope.
But that science is so fer us biforn,
We mowen nat, although we hadde it sworn,
It overtake, it slit away so faste;
It wol us maken beggers atte laste.

AL this yeman was thus in his
talking,
This chanoun drough hym
neer, and herde al thyng
Which this yeman spak, for
suspicioun
Of mennes speche evere hadde this chanoun.
for Catoun seith, that he that gilty is

HEERE BIGYNNETH THE CHANOONS YEMAN HIS TALE

Prima pars.

IN this chanoun I
dwelt have seven yeer,
And of his science am
I never the neer.
Al that I hadde I have
ylost therby;
And, God woot, so
hath many mo than I.
Cher I was wont to be
right fressh and gay
Of clothyng and of oother good array,
Now may I were an hose upon myn heed;
And wher my colour was bothe fressh & reed,
Now is it wan and of a leden hewe;
Whoso it useth, soore shal he rewe.
And of my swynk yet bled is myn eye;
Lo! which advantage is to multiplie!
That slidynge science hath me maad so bare,
That I have no good, wher that evere I fare;
And yet I am endetted so therby,

Demeth alle thyng be spoke of hym, ywis,
That was the cause he gan so ny hym drawe
To his yeman, to herkenen al his sawe.
And thus he seyde unto his yeman tho:
WOLDE thou thy pees, and speke no
wordes mo!

For if thou do, thou shalt it deere abyen
Thou sclaundrest me heere in this com-
paignye,
And eek discoverest that thou sholdest
hyde.

Ye? quod our hoost, telle on, what so
bityde;
Of al his thretyng rekke nat a myte!
In feith, quod he, namoore I do but lyte.
And whan this chanoun saugh it wolde
nat be,

But his yeman wolde telle his pryvetee,
He fledde away for verray sorwe and shame.
Al quod the yeman, heere shal arise game,
Al that I kan anon now wol I telle,
Syn he is goon, the foule feend hym quelle!
for nevere heerafter wol I with hym meete
for peny ne for pound, I yow biheete!
He that me broghte first unto that game,
Er that he dye, sorwe have he and shame!
for it is earnest to me, by my feith;
That feele I wel, whatso any man seith,
And yet, for al my smert, and al my grief,
for al my sorwe, labour, and meschief,
I koude nevere leve it in no wise.
Now wolde God, my wit myghte suffice
To tellen al that longeth to that art!
And nathelees yow wol I tellen part;
Syn that my lord is goon, I wol nat spare;
Swich thyng as that I knowe, I wol declare.
**Heere endeth the prologe of the Chanouns
Yemannes Tale.**

Of gold that I have borwed, trewely,
That whil I lyve, I shal it quite nevere.
Lat every man be war by me for evere!
What maner man that casteth hym therto,
If he continue, I holde his thrift ydo.
So help me God, therby shal he nat wynne,
But empte his purs, and make his wittes
thynne.
And whan he, thurgh his madnesse and
folye
hath lost his owene good thurgh jupartye,
Thanne he exciteth oother folk therto,
To lese hir good as he hymself hath do.
for unto shrewes joye it is and ese
To have hir felawes in peyne and disese,
Thus was I ones lerned of a clerk.
Of that no charge, I wol speke of oure werk.
Whan we been there as we shul exercise
Oure elyssh craft, we semen wonder wise,
Oure termes been so clerghal and so queynte,
I blowe the fir til that myn herte feynte.

WHAT sholde I tellen eche proporcioun
Of thynges whiche that we werche upon,
As on fyve or six ounces, may wel be,
Of silver or som oother quantite,

And biye me to telle yow the names
Of orpyment, brent bones, iren squames,
That into poudre grounden been ful smal?
And in an erthen pot how put is al,
And salt yput in, and also papeer,
Bisorn thise poudres that I speke of heer,
And wel ycovered with a lampe of glas;
And muchel oother thyng which that ther was?
And of the pot and glasses enlutyng,
That of the eyre myghte passe out nothyng,
Which that was maad, and of the care and wo
That we hadde in oure matires sublymyng,
And in amalgyng and calceynyng
Of quyksilver, yclept mercurie crude?
for alle our sleighes we kan nat conclude.
Oure orpyment and sublymed mercurie,
Oure grounden litarge eek on the porfurie,
And ech of thise of ounces a certeyn,
Noght helpeth us, oure labour is in veyn.
Ne ech oure spirites ascencioun,
Ne oure matires that lyen al fix adoun,
Nore in oure werkynge nothyng us availle.
for lost is al oure labour and travaille,
And al the cost, a twenty devel way,
Is lost also, which we upon it lay.

THER is also ful many another thyng
That is unto oure craft apertenyng;
Though I by ordre hem nat reherce kan,
Bycause that I am a lewed man;

Yet wol I telle hem as they come to mynde,
Thogh I ne kan nat sette hem in hir kynde;
As boole armonyak, vertgrees, boras,
And sondry vessels maad of erthe and glas,
Oure urynales, and our descensories,
Violes, croslets, and sublymatories,
Cucurbites, and alambikes eek,
And othere swiche, deere ynough a leek.
Nat nedeth it for to reherce hem alle,
Watres rubifyng, and boles galle,
Hresnyk, sal armonyak, and brymstoon;
And herbes koude I telle eek many oon,
As egremoyne, valerian, and lunarie,
And othere swiche, if that me liste tarie.
Oure lampes brennyng bothe nyght and day,
To brynge aboute oure purpos if we may;
Oure fourneys eek of calcinacioun,
And of watres albificacioun,
Unsekked lym, chalk, and gleyre of an ey,
Poudres diverse, ashes, donge, pisse, and cley,
Cered pokets, sal peter, vitriole,
And diverse fires maad of wode and cole;
Sal tartre, alkaly, and sal preparat,
And combust matires, and coagulat,
Cley maad with hors or mannes heer, and oille
Of tartre, alum, glas, berme, wort, and argoille,
Resalgar, and oure matires enbityng;
And eek of oure matires encorporyng,
And of oure silver citrinacioun,

Oure cementyng and fermentacioun,
Oure yngottes, testes, and many mo.

WOL yow telle, as was me taught also,
The foure spirites and the bodies sevene,
By ordre, as ofte I herde my lord hem
nevene.

The firste spirit quyksilver called is,
The seconde orpyment, the thridde, ywis,
Sal armonyak, and the ferthe brymstoon.
The bodies sevene eek, lo! hem heere anon:
Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe,
Mars iren, Mercurie quyksilver we clepe,
Saturnus leed, and Juppiter is tyn,
And Venus coper, by my fader kyn!

This cursed craft whoso wole excercise,
He shal no good han that hym may suffice;
for al the good he spendeth therabout,
He lese shal, therof have I no doute.
Whoso that listeth outen his folie,
Lat hym come forth, and lerne multiplie;
And every man that oght hath in his cofre,
Lat hym appiere, and were a philosopre.
Asaunce that craft is so light to leere?
Nay, nay, God woot, al be he monk or frere,
Prest or chanoun, or any oother wyght,
Though he sitte at his book bothe day and night
In lernyng of this elyssh nyce loore,
Al is in veyn, and parde, muchel moore!
To lerne a lewed man this subtiltee,
fy! spek nat therof, for it wol nat bee;
And konne he letterure, or konne he noon,
As in effect, he shal fynde it al oon.
for bothe two, by my savacioun,
Concluden, in multiplicacioun,
Vlike wel, whan they han al ydo;
This is to seyn, they failen bothe two.

ET forgat I to maken rehersaille
Of watres corosif, and of lymaille,
And of bodies mollificacioun,
And also of hire induracioun,
Oilles, ablucions, and metal fusible,
To tellen al wolde passen any bible
That owher is; wherfore, as for the beste,
Of alle these names now wol I me reste.
for as I trowe, I have yow toold ynowe
To reyse a feend, al looke he never so rowe.
Al! nay! lat be; the philosophres stoon,
Elixir clept, we sechen faste echoon,
for hadde we hym, thanne were it siker ynow.
But, unto God of hevene I make avow,
for al oure craft, whan we han al ydo,
With al oure sleighte, he wol nat come us to.
He hath ymaad us spenden muchel good,
for sorwe of which almost we wexen wood,
But that good hope crepeth in oure herte,
Supposynge ever, though we sore smerte,
To be releved by hym afterward.
Swich supposyng and hope is sharpe and hard;
I warne yow wel it is to seken evere;
That futur temps hath maad men to dissevere,
In trust therof, from al that evere they hadde.
Yet of that art they kan nat wexen sadde,
for unto hem it is a bitter sweete;

The
Chanouns
Yemannes
Tale

So semeth it; for nadde they but a sheete
Which that they myghte wrappe hem inne at nyght,
And a bak to walken inne by daylyght,
They wolde hem selle and spenden on the craft;
They kan nat stynte til nothyng be laft.
And everemoore, where that evere they goon
Men may hem knowe by smel of brymstoon;
For al the world, they stynken as a goot;
Hir savour is so rammyssh and so hoot,
That, though a man from hem a mile be,
The savour wole infecte hym, trusteth me;
Lo, thus by smelling, and threedbare array,
If that men liste, this folk they knowe may.
And if a man wole aske hem pryvely,
Why they been clothed so unthriftily,
They right anon wol rownen in his ere
And seyn, that if that they espied were,
Men wolde hem slee, bycause of hir science;
Lo, thus this folk bitrayen innocence!

DESSE over this; I go my tale unto.
Er that the pot be on the fire ydo,
Of metals with a certeyn quantite,
My lord hem tempreth, and no man but he,
Now he is goon, I dare seyn boldely,
for, as men seyn, he kan doon craftily;
Algate I woot wel he hath swich a name,
And yet ful ofte he renneth in a blame;
And wite ye how? ful ofte it happeth so,
The pot tobreketh, and farewell! al is go!
Thise metals been of so greet violence,
Oure walles mowe nat make hem resistence,
But if they weren wroght of lym and stoon;
They percen so, and thurgh the wal they goon,
And somme of hem synken into the ground,
Thus han we lost by tymes many a pound,
And somme are scatered al the floor aboute,
Somme lepe into the roof; withouten doute,
Though that the feend noght in oure sighte hym
shewe,

I trowe he with us be, that ilke shrewe!
In helle where that he lord is and sire,
Nis ther moore wo, ne moore rancour ne ire.
Whan that oure pot is broke, as I have sayd,
Every man chit, and halt hym yvele apayd.
Somme seyde, it was long on the fir makynge,
Somme seyde, nay! it was on the blowyng;
Thanne was I fered, for that was myn office;
It was nat tempred as it oghte be.

Nay! quod the fourthe, stynt, and herkne me;
Bycause our fir ne was nat maad of beech,
That is the cause, and oother noon, so theech!
I kan nat telle wheron it was along,
But wel I woot greet strif is us among.

What! quod my lord, ther is namoore to doone,
Of thise perils I wol be war eftsoone;
I am right siker that the pot was crased.
Be as be may, be ye nothyng amased;
As usage is, lat swepe the floor as swithe,
Plukke up your hertes, and beeth glad and blithe!
The mullok on an heap ysweped was,
And on the floor ycast a canevas,
And al this mullok in a syve ythrowe,

And sifted, and ypiked many a throwe.
Pardee! quod con, somewhat of oure metal
Yet is ther heere, though that we han nat al.
Although this thyng myshapped have as now,
Another tyme it may be wel ynow,
As mooste putte oure good in aventure;
A marchant, pardee! may nat ay endure,
Trusteth me wel, in his prosperitee;
Somytyme his good is drenched in the see,
And somtyme comth it sauf unto the londe.
Dees! quod my lord, the nexte tyme I shal
fonde

To bryngen oure craft al in another plite;
And but I do, sires, lat me han the wite;
Ther was default in somewhat, wel I woot.
ANOTHER seyde the fir was over hoot:
That we concluden everemoore amys,
We faille of that which that we wolden have,
And in oure madnesse everemoore we rave,
And whan we been togidres everichoon,
Every man semeth a Salomon.

But every thyng which shyneth as the gold,
Nis nat gold, as that I have herd it told;
Ne every appul that is fair to eye
Ne is nat good, what so men clappe or crye.
Right so, lo! fareth it amonges us;
He that semeth the wiseste, by Jhesus!
Is moost fool, whan it cometh to the preef;
And he that semeth trewest is a theef;
That shul ye knowe, er that I fro yow wende,
By that I of my tale have maad an ende.

Explicit prima pars. Et sequitur pars secunda.

THER is a chanoun of
religioun
Amonges us, wolde infecte
al a toun,
Thogh it as greet were as
was Nynyvee,
Rome, Alisaundre, Troye,
and othere three.
His sleighes and his infinit
falsnesse

Ther koude no man writen, as I gesse,
Though that he myghte lyven a thousand yeer.
In al this world of falschede nis his peer;
for in his termes so he wolde hym wynde,
And speke his wordes in so sly a kynde,
Whanne he commune shal with any wight,
That he wol make hym doten anon right,
But it a feend be, as hymselfen is.
ful many a man hath he begiled er this,
And wole, if that he lyve may a while;
And yet men ride and goon ful many a mile
hym for to seke and have his aqueyntaunce,
Noght knowyng of his false governaunce;
And if yow list to yewe me audience,
I wol it tellen heere in youre presence.

AT, worshipful chanouns religious,
Ne demeth nat that I sclaudre youre hous.
Although that my tale of a chanoun bee;
Of every ordre som shrewe is, pardee,
And God forbede that al a compaignye

sholde rewe oo singuleer mannes folye.
To sclaudre yow is nothyng myn entente,
But to correcten that is mys I mente.
This tale was nat oonly toold for yow,
But eek for othere mo; ye woot wel how
That, among Cristes apostelles twelve,
Ther nas no traytour but Judas hymselfe.
Thanne why sholde al the remenant have blame
That giltles were? By yow I seye the same.
Save oonly this, if ye wol herkne me,
If any Judas in youre covent be,
Remooveth hym bitymes, I yow rede,
If shame or los may causen any drede.
If shame or los may causen any drede,
And beeth nothyng displeased, I yow preye,
But in this cas herkne what I shal seye.

London was a preest, an annueleer,
That therinne dwelled hadde
many a yeer,
Which was so plesant and so
servysable
Unto the wyf, wheras he was at table,
That she wolde suffre hym nothyng for to paye
for bord ne clothyng, wente he never so gaye;
And spendyng silver hadde he right ynow.
Therof no fors; I wol procede as now,
And telle forth my tale of the chanoun,
That broghte this preest to confusoun.

HIS false chanoun cam upon a day
Unto this preestes chambre, wher he lay,
Bisechyng hym to lene hym a certeyn
Of gold, and he wolde quite it hym ageyn.
Leene me a marc, quod he, but dayes three,
And at my day I wol it quiten thee.

And if so be that thow me fynde fals,
Another day do hange me by the hals!
This preest hym took a marc, and that asswithe,
And this chanoun hym thanked ofte sith,
And took his leve, and wente forthe his weye,
And at the thridde day broghte his moneye,
And to the preest he took his gold agayn,
Wherof this preest was wonder glad and fayn.
Certes, quod he, nothyng anyeth me
To lene a man a noble, or two or thre,
Or what thyng were in my possessioun,
Whan he so trewe is of condicioun,
That in no wise he breke wole his day;
To swich a man I kan never seye nay.

What! quod this chanoun, sholde I be
untrewe?
Nay, that were thyng yfallen al of newe.
Trouthe is a thyng that I wol evere kepe,
Unto that day in which that I shal crepe
into my grave, or ellis God forbede!
Bileveth this as siker as the Crede.
God thanke I, and in good tyme be it sayd,
That ther was nevere man yet yvele apayd
for gold ne silver that he to me lente.
Nenevere falschede in myn herte I mente.
And, sire, quod he, now of my pryvetee,
Syn ye so goodlich han been unto me,
And lithed to me so greet gentillesse,
Somwhat to quyte with youre kyndenesse,
I wol yow shewe, if that yow list to leere,

I wol yow teche pleynly the manere,
How I kan werken in philosophie.
Taketh good heede ye shul wel seen at eye,
That I wol doon a maistrie er I go.
Ye, quod the preest, ye, sire, and wol ye so?
Marie! therof I pray yow hertely!
At youre comandement, sire, trewely,
Quod the chanoun, and ellis God forbede!
Loo, how this theef koude his servyse beede!
ful sooth it is, that swiche profred servyse
Stynketh, as witnessen thise olde wyse;
And that ful soone I wol it verifie
In this chanoun, roote of alle trecherie,
That everemoore delit hath and gladnesse,
Swiche feendly thoughtes in his herte impresse,
How Cristes peple he may to meschief brynge;
God hepe us from his false dissymulynge!

DOGHT wiste this preest with whom that he
delte,
Ne of his harm comynge he nothyng felte.
O sely preest! O sely innocent!
With covetise anon thou shalt be blent!
O graceles, ful blynd is thy conceite,
Nothyng ne artow war of the deceite
Which that this fox yshapen hath for thee;
His wily wrenches thou ne mayst nat flee.

Wherfore, to go to the conclusioun
That refereth to thy confusoun,
Unhappy man! anon I wol me hie
To tellen thyn unwit and thy folye,
And eek the falsnesse of that oother wrecche,
As ferforth as that my konnyng may strecche.
This chanoun was my lord, ye wolden weene;
Sire Hoost, in feith, and by the hevenes queene,
It was another chanoun, and nat hee,
That kan an hundred foold moore subtiltee!
He hath bitrayed folkes many tyme;
Of his falschede it dulleth me to ryme.
Evere whan that I speke of his falschede,
for shame of hym my chekes wexen rede,
Al gates, they bigynnen for to glowe,
for reednesse have I noon, right wel I knowe,
In my visage; for fumes diverse
Of metals, whiche ye han herd me reherce,
Consumed and wasted han my reednesse.

Now taak heede of this chanouns cursednesse!
Sire, quod he to the preest, lat youre man gon
for quiksilver, that we hadde it anon,
And lat hym bryngen ounces two or three;
And whan he comth, as faste shul ye see
A wonder thyng, which ye saugh nevere er this.
Sire, quod the preest, it shal be doon ywis.
He bad his servant fecchen hym this thyng,
And he al redy was at his biddynge,
And wente hym forth, and cam anon agayn
With this quiksilver, soothly for to sayn,
And toke thise ounces thre to the chanoun;
And he hem leyde faire and wel adoun,
And bad the servant coles for to brynge,
That he anon myghte go to his werkynge.

HE coles right anon weren yfet,
And this chanoun took out a crosselet
Of his bosom, and shewed it to the preest.

This instrument, quod he, which that thou seest,
Taak in thyn hand, and put thyself therinne
Of this quyksilver an ounce, and heer bigynne,
In the name of Crist, to wexe a filosofre.
Ther been ful fewe, whiche that I wolde profre
To shewen hem thus muche of my science.
for ye shul seen heer, by experience,
That this quyksilver wol I mortifye
Right in youre sighte anon, I wol nat lye,
And make it as good silver and as fyn
As ther is any in youre purse or myn,
Or elleswhere, and make it malliable;
And elles, holdeth me fals and unable
Amonges folk for evere to appeere!
I have a poudre heer, that coste me deere,
Shal make al good, for it is cause of al
My konnyng, which that I yow shewen shal.
Voydeth youre man, and lat hym be theroute,
And shette the dore, whils we been aboute
Oure pryvete, that no man us espie
Whils that we werke in this filosofie.
As he bad fulfilled was in dede;
This ilke servant anonright out yede,
And his maister shette the dore anon,
And to hire labour spedily they gon.
This preest, at this cursed chanouns bidding
Upon the fir anon sette this thyng,
And blew the fir, and bisyed hym ful faste;
And this chanoun into the crosselet caste
A poudre, noot I wherof that it was
Ymaad, outhur of chalk, outhur of glas,
Or somewhat elles, was nat worth a flye,
To blynde with the preest; and bad hym hie
The coles for to couchen al above
The crosselet. **F**or, in tokenyng I thee love,
Quod this chanoun, thyne owene handes two
Shul werche al thyng which that shal heer be do.
GRACUNT mercy! quod the preest, and was
ful glad,
And couched coles as that chanoun bad;
And while he bisy was, this feendly wrecche,
This false chanoun, the foule feend hym fecche!
Out of his bosom took a bechen cole,
In which ful subtilly was maad an hole,
And therinne put was of silver lemaille
An ounce, and stopped was, withouten faille,
The hole with wax, to kepe the lemaille in;
And understondeth, that this false gyn
Was nat maad ther, but it was maad bifore;
And othere thynges I shal telle moore
Hereafterward, whiche that he with hym broghte;
Er he cam ther, hym to bigile he thoughte;
And so he hiede, er that they wente atwynne;
Til he had tered hym, he koude nat blyne.
It dulleth me whan that I of hym speke,
On his falschede fayn wolde I me wreke,
If I wiste how; but he is heere and there;
He is so variaunt, he abit nowhere.
At taketh heede now, sires, for Goddes love!
He took this cole of which I spak above,
And in his hand he baar it pryvely,
And whyles the preest couchede bisily

The coles, as I tolde yow er this,
This chanoun seyde, freend, ye doon amys;
This is nat couched as it oghte be;
But soone I shal amenden it, quod he.
Now lat me medle therewith but a while,
for of yow have I pitee, by Seint Gile!
Ye been right hoot, I se wel how ye swete;
Have heer a clooth, and wipe away the wete;
And whyles that the preest wiped his face,
This chanoun took his cole with harde grace,
And leyde it above, upon the myddeward
Of the crosselet, and blew wel afterward,
Til that the coles gonne faste brenne.
Oll yeve us drynke, quod the chanoun
thenne,
As swithe al shal be wel, I undertake;
Sitte we down, and let us myrie make.
And whan that this chanounes bechen cole
Was brent, al the lemaille, out of the hole,
Into the crosselet fil anon adoun;
And so it mooste nedes, by resoun,
Syn it so evene aboven couched was;
But therof wiste the preest nothyng, alas!
He demed alle the coles yliche good,
for of that sleighte he nothyng understood.
And whan this alkamystre saugh his tyme,
Ris up, quod he, sire preest, & stondeth by me,
And for I woot wel ingot have ye noon,
Gooth, walketh forth, and bringe us a chalkstoon;
for I wol make oon of the same shap
That is an ingot, if I may han hap;
And bryngeth eek with yow a bolle or a panne
ful of water, and ye shul se wel thanne
How that oure bisynesse shal thryve and preene.
And yet, for ye shal han no mysbileve,
Ne wrong conceite of me in youre absence,
I ne wol nat been out of youre presence,
But go with yow, and come with yow ageyn.
The chambre dore, shortly for to seyn,
They opened and shette, and went hir weye,
And forth with hem they carieden the keye,
And coome agayn withouten any delay.
What sholde I tarien al the longe day?
He took the chalk, and shoop it in the wise
Of an ingot, as I shal yow devyse.
I seye, he took out of his owene sleeve,
A teyne of silver, yvele moot he cheeve!
Which that ne was nat but an ounce of weighte;
And taketh heede now of his cursed sleighte!
He shoop his ingot, in lengthe and eek in brede
Of this teyne, withouten any drede,
So stily, that the preest it nat espide;
And in his sleeve agayn he gan it hide;
And fro the fir he took up his matere,
And in thyngot putte it with myrie cheere,
And in the water/vessel he it caste
Whan that hym luste, and bad the preest as faste,
Loke what ther is, put in thin hand and grop,
Chow fynde shalt ther silver, as I hope.
What, devel of helle! sholde it ellis be?
Shavyng of silver silver is, pardee!
He putte his hand in, and took up a teyne
Of silver fyn, and glad in every weyne

Was this preest, whan he saugh that it was so.
Goddes blessing, and his moodres also,
And alle halwes have ye, sire chanoun!
seyde this preest, and I hir malisoun,
But, and ye vouchesauf to techen me
This noble craft and this subtiltee,
I wol be youre, in al that evere I may.
GOD the seconde tyme, that ye may taken heede
And been expert of this, & in youre neede
Another daye assaye in myn absence
This disciplyne, and this crafty science.
Lat take another ounce, quod he tho,
Of quyksilver, withouten wordes mo,
And do therewith as ye han doon er this
With that oother, which that now silver is.
This preest hym bisith in al that he kan
To doon as this chanoun, this cursed man,
Comanded hym, and faste he blew the fir,
for to come to theffet of his desir.
And this chanoun, right in the meene while,
Alredy was, the preest eft to bigile,
And, for a countenance, in his hand he bar
An holwe stikke, taak kepe and be war!
In the ende of which an ounce, and namoore,
Of silver lemaille put was, as bifore
Was in his cole, and stopped with wax weel,
for to kepe in his lemaille every deel.
And whil this preest was in his bisynesse,
This chanoun with his stikke gan hym dresse
To hym anon, and his poudre caste in
As he did er; The devel out of his skyn
hym terte, I pray to God, for his falschede!
for he was evere fals in thoght and dede;
And with this stikke, above the crosselet,
That was ordeyned with that false get,
He stired the coles, til relente gan
The wax agayn the fir, as every man,
But it a fool be, woot wel it moot nede,
And al that in the stikke was out yede,
And in the crosselet hastily it fel.
Oll, goode sires, what wol ye bet than wel?
Whan that this preest thus was bigiled
ageyn,
Supposyng nought but trouthe, sooth to seyn,
He was so glad, that I kan nat expresse
In no manere his myrthe and his gladnesse;
And to the chanoun he profred eftsoone
Body and good. **Y**e, quod the chanoun soone,
Though powre I be, crafty thou shalt me fynde;
I warne thee, yet is ther moore bihynde.
Is ther any coper herinne? seyde he.
Ye, quod the preest, sire, I trowe wel ther be.
Elles go bye us som, and that as swithe,
Now, goode sire, go forth thy wey and by the.
He wente his wey, and with the coper cam,
And this chanoun it in his handes nam,
And of that coper weyed out but an ounce.
Al to symple is my tonge to pronounce,
As ministre of my wit, the doublenesse
Of this chanoun, roote of alle cursednesse.
He semed freendly to hem that knewe hym noght,
But he was feendly bothe in herte and thoght.

It werieth me to telle of his falsnesse,
And natheles yet wol I it expresse,
To thentente that men may be war therby,
And for noon oother cause, trewely.
He putte the ounce of coper in the crosselet,
And on the fir as swithe he hath it set,
And caste in poudre, and made the preest to blowe,
And in his werkynge for to stoupe lowe,
As he dide er, and al nas but a jape;
Right as hym liste, the preest he made his ape;
And afterward in the ingot he it caste,
And in the panne putte it at the laste
Of water, and in he putte his owene hand;
And in his sleeve, as ye biforne/hand
Herde me telle, he hadde a silver teyne.
He stily tooke it out, this cursed heyne,
Unwityng this preest of his false craft,
And in the pannes botme he bath it laft;
And in the water rombled to and fro,
And wonder pryvely took up also
The coper teyne, noght knowyng this preest,
And hidde it, and hym hente by the breast,
And to hym spak and thus seyde in his game,
Stoupest adoun, by God, ye be to blame,
Helpeth me now, as I dide yow whil'er,
Putte in youre hand, and looketh what is theer.
This preest took up this silver teyne anon,
And thanne seyde the chanoun: Lat us gon
With thise thre teynes, whiche that we han wrought
To som goldsmyth, and wite if they been oght.
for, by my feith, I nolde, for myn hood,
But if that they were silver, fyn and good,
And that as swithe preeved shal it bee.
ANTO the goldsmyth with this eteynes three
They wente, and putte thise teynes in assay
To fir and hamer; myghte no man seyenay,
But that they weren as hem oghte be.
This sotted preest, who was gladder than he?
Was nevere brid gladder agayn the day,
Ne nyghtyngale, in the sesoun of May,
Nas nevere man that luste bet to synge;
Ne ladye lustier in carolyng
Or for to speke of love and wommanhede,
Ne knyght in armes to doon an hardy dede
To stonde in grace of his lady deere,
Than hadde this preest this sory craft to leere;
And to the chanoun thus he spak and seyde:
OR love of God, that for us alle deyde,
And as I may deserve it unto yow,
What shal this receite coste? telleth now!
By oure lady, quod this chanoun, it is deere,
I warne yow wel; for save I and a frere
In Engelond ther kan no man it make.
No fors, quod he, now, sire, for Goddes sake,
What shal I paye? Telleth me, I preye.
Ywis, quod he, it is ful deere, I seye;
Sire, at oo word, if that thee list it have,
Ye shul paye fourty pound, so God me save!
And, nere the freendshipe that ye dide er this
To me, ye sholde paye moore, ywis.
THIS preest the somme of fourty pound
anon
Of nobles fette, and took hem everichon

To this chanoun, for this ilke receit;
At his werkynge nas but fraude and deceit.
Sire preest, he seyde, I kepe han no loos
Of my craft, for I wolde it kepte cloos;
And, as ye love me, kepeth it secree;
for, and men knewen al my soutiltee,
By God, they wolden han so greet envye
To me, bycause of my philosophye,
I sholde be deed, ther were noon oother weye.
God it forbeede! quod the preest; what sey ye?
Yet hadde I levere spenden al the good
Which that I have, or elles wexe I wood!
Than that ye sholden falle in swiche mescheef.
For youre good wyl, sire, have ye right good
preef,
Quod the chanoun, and farwel, grant mercy!
He wente his wey, and never the preest hym sy
shoolde
Maken assay, at swich tyme as he wolde
Of this receit, farwel! it wolde nat be!
Lo, thus byjaped and bigiled was he!
Thus maketh he his introduccioun,
To brynge folk to hir destruccioun.
Considereth sires, how that in ech estaat,
Bitwixe men and gold ther is debaat
So ferforth, that unnethes is ther noon.
This multiplying blent so many oon,
That, in good feith, I trowe that it bee
The cause grettest of swich scarsetee.
Philosophres speken so mystily
In this craft, that men kan nat come therby,
For any wit that men han now adayes.
They mowe wel chiteren as that doon jayes,
And in hir termes sette hir lust and payne,
But to hir purpos shul they nevere atteyne.
A man may lightly lerne, if he have aught,
To multiplie, and brynge his good to naught!
Lo! swich a lucre is in this lusty game,
A mannes myrthe it wol turne unto grame,
And empten also grete and hevye purses,
And maken folk for to purchasen curses
Of hem that han hir good therto ylent.
O fy! for shame! they that han been brent,
Alas! kan they nat flee the fires heete?
Ye that it use, I rede ye it leete,
Lest ye lese al; for Bet than nevere is late.
Nevere to thryve were to long a date.
Though ye prolle ay, ye shul it nevere fynde;
Ye been as boold as is Bayard the blynde,
That blondreth forth, and peril casteth noon;
He is as boold to renne agayn a stoon,
As for to goon besides in the weye.
So faren ye that multiplie, I seye.
If that youre eyen kan nat seen aright,
Looke that youre mynde lakke noght his sight,
for though ye looke never so brode, and stare,
Ye shul nat wynne a myte on that chaffare,
But wasten al that ye may rape and renne.
Withdrawe the fir, lest it to faste brenne;
Medleth namoore with that art, I mene,

for, if ye doon, youre thrift is goon ful clene.
And right as swithe I wol yow tellen heere,
What philosophres seyn in this mateere.
O, thus seith Arnold of the Newe Toun,
As his Rosarie maketh mencoun;
He seith right thus, withouten any lye,
Ther may no man mercurie mortifie,
But it be with his brother knowlechynge.
O that he, which that first seyde this thyng,
Of philosophres fader was, Hermes;
He seith, how that the dragon, douteles,
Ne dyeth nat, but if that he be slayn
With his brother; and that is for to sayn,
By the dragon, Mercurie and noon oother,
He understood; and Brymston by his brother,
That out of Sol and Luna were ydrawe.
And therfore, seyde he, taak heede to my sawe;
Lat no man bisye hym this art for to seche,
But if that he thentencoun and speche
Of philosophres understonde kan;
And if he do, he is a lewed man.
for this science and this konnyng, quod he,
Is of the secree of secretes, pardee.
SO ther was a disciple of Plato
That on a tyme seyde his maister to,
As his book Senior wol bere witness,
And this was his demande, in soothfastnesse;
Telle me the name of the privee stoon.
And Plato answerde unto hym anon,
Take the stoon that Titanos men name,
Which is that? quod he. Magnesia is the
same,
Seide Plato. Ye, sire, and is it thus?
This is ignotum per ignotius.
What is Magnesia, good sire, I yow preyne?
It is a water that is maad, I seye,
Of elementes foure, quod Plato.
Telle me the roote, good sire, quod he tho,
Of that water, if that it be youre wille.
Nay, nay, quod Plato, certein that I nylle.
The philosophres sworn were everychoon
That they sholden discovere it unto noon.
Ne in no book it write in no manere;
for unto Crist it is so lief and deere,
That he wol nat that it discovered bee,
But where it liketh to his deitee
Man for tenspire, and eek for to deffende
Whom that hym liketh; lo, this is the ende.
THANNE conclude I thus, sith God of
hevene
Ne wil nat that the philosophres nevene
How that a man shal come unto this stoon,
I rede, as for the beste, lete it goon.
for whoso maketh God his adversarie,
As for to werken anythyng in contrarie
Of his wil, certes never shal he thryve,
Thogh that he multiplie terme of his lyve.
And there a poynt; for ended is my tale;
God sende every trewe man boote of his bale!
Amen.
Heere is ended the Chanouns Yemannes Tale.

WITTE ye nat where ther
stant a litel toun
Which that ycleped is
Bobbe up and down,
Under the Blee, in Caun-
terbury weye?
Ther gan oure Hooste for
to jape and pleye,
And seyde, Sires, what!
Dun is in the Myre!
Is ther no man, for preyne ne for hyre,
That wole awake oure felawe al bihynde?
A theef myghte hym ful lightly robbe and bynde.
See how he nappeth! see, for cokkes bones!
As he wol falle fro his hors atones.
Is that a cook of Londoun, with meschaunce?
Do hym come forth, he knoweth his penaunce,
for he shal telle a tale, by my fey!
Although it be nat worth a botel hey.
Awake, thou cook, quod he, God yeve thee sorwe!
What eyleth thee to slepe by the morwe?
Hastow had fleen al nyght, or artow dronke?
Or hastow with some quene al nyght yswonke,
So that thou mayst nat holden up thy nheed?
This cook, that was ful pale and nothyng reed,
Seide to oure Hoost, So God my soule blesse,
As ther is falle on me swich hevynesse,
Noot I nat why, that me were levere slepe
Than the beste galon wyn in Chepe.
Wel, quod the maunciple, if it may doon ese
To thee, sire cook, and to no wight displese
Which that heere rideth in this compaignye,
And that oure Hoost wol, of his curteisye,
I wol as now excuse thee of thy tale,
for, in good feith, thy visage is ful pale,
Thyne eyen daswen eek, as that me thynketh,
And wel I woot, thy breeth ful soure stynketh,
That sheweth wel thou art nat wel disposed;
Of me, certeyn, thou shal nat been yglosed.
See how he ganeth, lo, this dronken wight!
As though he wolde swolwe us anonright.
Hoold cloos thy mouth, man, by thy fader kyn!
The devel of helle sette his foot therin!
Thy cursed breeth in infecte wole us alle;
fy, stynkyng swyn! fy, foule moote thee falle!
Al taketh heede, sires, of this lusty man.
Now, sweete sire, wol ye justen atte fan?
Therto me thynketh ye been wel yshape!
I trowe that ye dronken han wyn ape,
And that is whan men pleyen with a straw.
AND with this speche the cook wex wrooth
and wraw,
And on the maunciple he gan nodde faste
for lakke of speche, and down the hors hym caste,
Wheras he lay, til that men up hym took;
This was a fair chyvachee of a cook!

Alas! he hadde holde hym by his ladel!
And, er that he agayn were in his sadel,
Ther was greet showvyng bothe to and fro,
To lifte hym up, and muchel care and wo,
So unweeldy was this sory palled goost;
And to the maunciple thanne spak oure Hoost:
Bycause drynke hath dominacioun
Upon this man, by my savacioun,
I trowe he lewedly wolde telle his tale,
for were it wyn, or oold or moysty ale,
That he hath dronke, he speketh in his nose,
And fneseth faste, and eek he hath the pose.
He hath also to do moore than ynough
To kepe hym and his capul out of slough;
And, if he falle from his capul eftsoone,
Thanne shul we alle have ynough to doone,
In lifytyng up his hevye dronken cors;
Telle on thy tale, of hym make I no fors.
BUT yet, maunciple, in feith thou art tonyce,
Thus openly repreve hym of his vice.
Another day he wole, peraventure,
Reclayme thee, and brynge thee to lure;
I mene, he speke wole of smale thynges,
As for to pynchen at thy rekenynges,
That were nat honeste, if it cam to preef.
No, quod the maunciple, that were a greet
mescheef!
So myghte he lightly brynge me in the snare.
Yet hadde I levere payen for the mare
Which he rit on, than he sholde with me stryve;
I wol nat wratthe hym, al so moot I thryve!
That that I spak, I seyde it in my bourde;
And wite ye what? I have heer, in a gourde,
A draughte of wyn, ye, of a ripe grape,
And right anon ye shul seen a good jape.
This cook shal drynke therof, if I may;
Up peyne of deeth, he wol nat seye me nay!
And certeynly, to tellen as it was,
Of this vessel the cook drank faste, alas!
What neded hym? he drank ynough biforn.
And whan he hadde pouped in this horn,
To the maunciple he took the gourde agayn,
And of that drynke the cook was wonder fayn,
And thanked hym in swich wise as he koude.
Thanne gan oure Hoost to laughen wonder
loude,
And seyde, I se wel it is necessarie,
Where that we goon, good drynke we with us carie;
for that wol turne rancour and disese
Tacord and love, and many a wrong apese.
O thou Bachus! yblessed be thy name
That so kanst turnen earnest into game!
Worship and thank be to thy deitee!
Of that mateere ye gete namoore of me.
Telle on thy tale, maunciple, I thee preyne.
Wel, sire, quod he, now herkneith what I seye.
Thus endeth the prologe of the Maunciple.

NEERE BIGYNNETH THE MAUNCIPLES TALE OF THE CROWE

NHEBUS dwelled
heere in this erthe a-
doun,
As olde bookes mak-
en mencoun,
He was the mooste
lusty bachiler
In al this world, and
eek the best archer.
He slow Phitoun, the

serpent, as he lay
Slepyng agayn the sonne upon a day;
And many another noble worthy dede
He with his bowe wroughte, as men may rede.
Pleyen he koude on every mynstralcie,
And syngen, that it was a melodie
To heeren of his cleere voys the soun.
Certes the kyng of Thebes, Amphion,
That with his syngyng walled that citee,
Koude nevere syngen half so wel as hee.
Cherto he was the semelieste man
That is or was, sith that the world bigan.
What nedeth it his fetures to discryve?
For in this world was noon so fair on lyve.
He was therewith fulfild of gentillesse,
Of honour, and of parfit worthynesse.
This Phebus, that was flour of bachilrie,
As wel in fredom as in chivalrie,
For his desport, in signe eek of victorie
Of Phitoun, so as telleth us the storie,
Was wont to beren in his hand a bowe.

NOw hadde this Phebus in his hous a
crowe,
Which in a cage he fostred many a day,
And taughte it speken, as men teche a jay.
Whit was this crowe as is a snow-whit swan,
And countrefete the speche of every man
He koude, whan he sholde telle a tale.
Therewith in al this world no nyghtyngale
Ne koude, by an hondred thousand deel,
Syngen so wonder myrily and weel.
Now hadde this Phebus in his hous a wyf,
Which that he lovede moore than his tyf,
And nyght and day dide evere his diligence
Hir for to plesse, and doon hire reverence;
Save oonly, if the sothe that I shal sayn,
Jalous he was, and wolde have kept hire fayn;
For hym were looth byjaped for to be.
And so is every wight in swich degree;
But al in ydel, for it availleth noght.
A good wyf, that is clene of werk and thought,
Sholde nat been kept in noon awayt, certayn;
And trewely, the labour is in wayn
To kepe a shrew, for it wol nat bee.
This holde I for a verray nyctee,
To spille labour for to kepe wyves;
Thus writen olde clerkes in hir tyves.
But now to purpos, as I first bigan:
This worthy Phebus dooth al that he kan

To plesen hire, wenyng that swich plesauce,
And for his manhede and his governaunce,
That no man sholde han put hym from hire
grace.
But God it woot, ther may no man embrace
As to destreyne a thyng, which that nature
hath naturelly set in a creature.
Caak any bryd, and put it in a cage,
And do al thyn entente and thy corage
To fostre it tendrely with mete and drynke
Of alle deyntees that thou kanst biethynke,
And keep it also clenly as thou may;
Although his cage of gold be never so gay,
Yet hath this bryd, by twenty thousand foold,
Levere in a forest, that is rude and coold,
Goon ete wormes and swich wrecchednesse,
for evere this bryd wol doon his bisynesse
To escape out of his cage, if he may;
His libertee this bryd desireth ay.
Lat take a cat, & fostre hym wel with milk
And tendre flessh, & make his couche of silk;
And lat hym seen a mous go by the wal;
Anon he weyeth milk, and flessh, and al,
And every deyntee that is in that hous,
Swich appetit hath he to ete a mous.
Lo, heere hath lust his dominacioun,
And appetit fleemeth discrecioun.
A she-wolf hath also a vileyns kynde;
The lewdeste wolf that she may fynde,
Or leest of reputacioun, wol she take
In tyme whan hir lust to han a make.

ALE these ensamples speke I by this
men
That been untrew, and nothyng by
women.
for men han evere a likerous appetit
On lower thyng to parfournen hir delit
Than on hire wyves, be they never so faire,
Ne never so trewe, ne so debonaire,
flessh is so newefangel, with meschaunce,
That we ne konne in nothyng han plesauce
That sowneth into vertu any while.

THIS Phebus, which that thoghte
upon no gile,
Deceyved was, for al his jolitee;
for under hym another hadde shee,
A man of litel reputacioun,
Nat worth to Phebus in comparisoun.
The moore harm is; it happeth ofte so,
Of which ther cometh muchel harm and wo.
And so bifel, whan Phebus was absent,
His wyf anon hath for hir lemman sent.
Hir lemman? certes, this is a knavish speche!
for yeveth it me, and that I yow biseche.
The wise Plato seith, as ye may rede,
The word moot nede accorde with the dede.
If men shal telle proprely a thyng,
The word moot cosyn be to the werkynge.
I am a boystous man; right thus seye I,

Ther nys no difference, trewely
Bitwixe a wyf that is of heigh degree,
If of hire body dishoneste she be,
And a poure wenche, oother than this,
If it so be, they werke bothe amys,
But that the gentile, in hire staat above,
She shal be cleped his lady, as in love;
And for that oother is a poure womman,
She shal be cleped his wenche, or his lemman.
And, God it woot, myn owene deere brother,
Men leyn that oon as lowe as lith that oother.
Right so, bitwixe a titleles tiraunt
And an outlawe, or a theef erraunt,
The same I seye, ther is no difference.
To Alisaundre toold was this sentence:
That, for the tiraunt is of gretter myght,
By force of meynne for to sleen dounright,
And brennen hous and hoom, and make al playn,
Lo, therfore is he cleped a capitayn;
And, for the outlawe hath but smal meynne,
And may nat doon so greet a harm as he,
Ne brynge a contree to so greet mescheef,
Men clepen hym an outlawe or a theef.
But, for I am a man noght textuel,
I wol noght telle of textes never a deel;
I wol go to my tale, as I bigan.

NHEBUS wyf had sent for hir
lemman,
Anon they wroughten al hire lust volage.
The white crowe, that heeng ay in the cage,
Biheeld hire werk, and seyde never a word,
And whan that hoom was come Phebus, the lord,
This crowe sang Cokkow! cokkow! cokkow!
What, bryd? quod Phebus, what song
syngestow?

Ne were thou wont so myrily to synge
That to myn herte it was a rejoyssynge
To heere thy voys? Allas! what song is this?
By God! quod he, I synge nat amys.
Phebus, quod he, for al thy worthynesse,
for al thy beautee and thy gentillesse,
for al thy song and al thy mynstralcye,
for al thy waityng, blered is thyn eye
With oon of litel reputacioun,
Noght worth to thee, as in comparisoun,
The montance of a gnat; so moote I thryve!
for on thy bed thy wyf I saugh hym swyve.
What wol ye moore? The crowe anon hym
tolde
By sadde tokens and by wordes bolde,
How that his wyf had doon hire lecherye,
hym to greet shame and to greet vileynye;
And tolde hym ofte, he gaugh it with his eyen.
This Phebus gan awayward for to wryen,
And thoughte his sorweful herte brast
atwo;
his bowe he bente, and sette therinne a flo,
And in his ire his wyf thanne hath he slayn.
This is the effect, ther is namoore to sayn;
for sorwe of which he brak his mynstralcie,
Bothe harpe, and lute, and gyterne, and sautrie;
And eek he brak his arwes and his bowe,
And after that, thus spak he to the crowe:

TRAITOUR, quod he, with tonge of scor-
pioun,
Thou hast me broght to my confusioun!
Allas! that I was wrought! why nere I deed?
O deere wyf! O gemme of lustiheed!
That were to me so sad and eek so trewe,
Now listow deed, with face pale of hewe,
ful gilteles, that dorste I swere, ywys!
O rakel hand! to doon so foule amys!
O trouble wit! O ire reccheles!
That unavyssed smyttest gilteles!
O wantrust! ful of fals suspicioun,
Where was thy wit and thy discrecioun?
O every man, beware of rakelnesse,
Ne trowe nothyng withouten strong witnesse.
Smyt nat to soone, er that ye witen why,
And beeth avysed wel and sobrelly,
Er ye doon any execucioun
Upon youre ire, for suspicioun.
Allas! a thousand folk hath rakel ire
fully fordoon, and broght hem in the mire.
Allas! for sorwe I wol myselfen slee!
And to the crowe, O false theef! seyde he,
I wol thee quite anon thy false tale!
Thou songe whilom lyk a nyghtyngale;
Now shaltow, false theef, thy song forgon,
And eek thy white fetheres everichon,
Ne nevere in al thy lif ne shaltow speke.
Thus shal men on a traytour been awreke;
Thou and thyn ofspryng evere shul be blake,
Ne nevere sweete noyse shul ye make,
But evere crie agayn tempest and rayn,
In tokenyng that thurgh thee my wyf is slayn.
And to the crowe he stirte, and that anon,
And pulled his white fetheres everichon,
And made hym blak, and refte hym al his song,
And eek his speche, and out at dore hym slong
Unto the devel, which I hym bitake;
And for this caas been alle crows blake.

FORDYNGES, by this ensample I yow
preye,
Beth war, and taketh kepe what I seye;
Ne telleth nevere no man in youre lyf
How that another man hath dight his wyf;
He wol yow haten mortally, certeyn.
Daun Salomon, as wise clerkes seyn,
Techeth a man to kepen his tonge weel;
But as I seyde, I am noght textuel.
But natheles, thus taughte me my dame:
My sone, thenk on the crowe, a Goddes name;
My sone, keep wel thy tonge and keep thy freend.
A wikked tonge is worse than a feend.
My sone, from a feend men may hem blesse;
My sone, God of his endeles goodnesse
Walled a tonge with teeth and lippes eke,
for man sholde hym avyse what he speke;
My sone, ful ofte, for to muche speche,
hath many a man been spilt, as clerkes teche;
But for a litel speche avysely
Is no man shent, to speke generally.
My sone, thy tonge sholdestow restreyne
At alle tymes, but whan thou doost thy peyne
To speke of God, in honour and preyere.

The
Maunciples
Tale

The
Maunciples
Tale

The firste vertu, sone, if thou wolt leere,
Is to restreyn and kepe wel thy tonge;
Thus lerne children whan that they been yonge.
My sone, of muchel spekyng yuele avysed,
Ther lasse spekyng hadde ynough suffised,
Comth muchel harm, thus was me toold and
taught.
In muchel speche synne wanteth naught.
Mostow wherof a rakel tonge serveth?
Right as a swerd forkutteth and forkerveth
An arm atwo, my deere sone, right so
A tonge kutteth freendshipe al atwo.
A jangler is to God abhomyneable;
Reed Salomon, so wys and honorable;
Reed David in his Psalmes, reed Senekke.
My sone, spek nat, but with thyn heed thou bekke.
Dissimule as thou were deaf, if that thou heere
A jangler speke of perilous mateere.
The flemyng seith, and lerne it if thee leste,
That Litel janglyng causeth muchel reste.
My sone, if thou no wikked word hast seyde,
Thee thar nat drede for to be biwreyd;
But he that hath mysseyd, I dar wel sayn,
He may by no wey clepe his word agayn.
Thyng that is seyde, is seyde; and forth it gooth,
Though hym repente, or be hym leef or looth.
He is his thral to whom that he hath sayd
A tale, of which he is now yuele apayd.
My sone, be war, and be noon auctour newe
Of tidynges, whether they been false or trewe.
Wherso thou come, amonges hye or lowe,
Kepe wel thy tonge, and thenk upon the crowe.

Heere is ended the Maunciples Tale of the Crowe.

Here folweth the prologe of the Persones Tale.

By that the maunciple hadde
his tale al ended,
The sonne fro the south
lyne was descended
So lowe, that he nas nat, to
my sighte
Degrees nyne and twenty
as in highte.
Foure of the klokke it was
tho, as I gesse;
for elevene foot, or litel moore or lesse,
My shadwe was at thilke tyme, as there
Of swiche feet as my lengthe parted were
In sixe feet equal of proporcioun.
Therwith the moones exaltacioun,
I meene Libra, alwey gan ascende,
As we were entryng at a thropes ende;
for which our Hoost, as he was wont to gye,
As in this caas, oure joly compaignye,
Seyde in this wise, Lordynges everichoon,
Now lakket us no tales mo than oon.
fulfilled is my sentence and my decree;
I trowe that we han herd of ech degree.

Almoost fulfilled is at myn ordinaunce;
I pray to God so yewe hym right good chaunce
That telleth this tale to us lustily.
Sire preest, quod he, artow a vicary?
Or arte a person? sey sooth, by thy fey!
Be what thou be, ne breke thou nat oure pley;
for every man, save thou, hath toold his tale,
Anbokele, and shewe us what is in thy male;
for trewely, me thynketh, by thy cheere,
Thou sholdest knytte up wel a greet mateere.
Telle us a fable anon, for cokkes bones!

HIS persoun, him answerde al atones,
For Paul, that writeth unto Thymothee,
Repreth hem that weyeth soothfastnesse,
And tellen fables and swich wrecchednesse.
Why sholde I sowen draf out of my fest,
Whan I may sowen whete, if that me lest?
for which I seye, if that yow list to heere
Moralitee and vertuous mateere,
And thanne that ye wol yewe me audience,
I wol ful fayn, at Cristes reverence,
Do yow plesaunce leefful, as I kan.
But trusteth wel, I am a southren man,
I kan nat geeste rum, ram, ruf, by lettre,
Ne, God woot, rym holde I but litel bettre;
And therefore, if yow list, I wol nat glose.
I wol yow telle a myrie tale in prose
To knytte up at this feeste, and make an ende.
And Jhesu, for his grace, wit me sende
To shewe yow the wey, in this viage,
Of thilke parfit glorious pilgrymage
That highte Jerusalem celestial.
And, if ye vouchesauf, anon I shal
Bigynne upon my tale, for whiche I preye
Telle youre avys, I kan no bettre seye.
But natheles, this meditacioun
I putte it ay under correccioun
Of clerkes, for I am nat textueel;
I take but the sentence, trusteth wel.
Therefore I make protestacioun
That I wol stonde to correccioun.
ADON this word we han assented
soone,
for, as us semed, it was for to doone,
To enden in som vertuous sentence,
And for to yewe hym space and audience;
And bede oure Hoost he sholde to hym seye,
That alle we to telle his tale hym preye.
Oure Hoost hadde the wordes for us alle:
Sire preest, quod he, now faire yow bifalle!
Sey what yow list, and we wol gladly heere;
And with that word, he seyde in this manere:
Telleth, quod he, youre meditacioun.
But hasteth yow, the sonne wol adoun;
Beth fructuous, and that in litel space,
And to do wel God sende yow his grace.
Explicit prohemium.

NEERE BIGYNNETH THE PERSONS TALE

Jer. vi. State super vias et videte et interrogate de viis antiquis, que sit via bona; et ambulate in ea, et invenietis refrigerium animabus vestris, &c.

O sweete Lord
God of hevene, that
no man wole per-
isse, but wole that
we comen alle to the
knoweleche of hym,
& to the blissful lif
that is perdurable,
amonesteth us by
the prophete Jere-
mie, and seith in this wyse: Stondeth
upon the weyes, & seeth and axeth of olde
pathes, that is to seyn, of olde sentences,
which is the goode wey; & walketh in that
wey, and ye shal fynde refresshyng for
yowre soules, &c.

NANYE been the weyes espiutuels
that leden folk to oure Lord Jhesu
Crist, and to the regne of glorie.
Of whiche weyes, ther is a ful noble wey
and a ful covenable, which may nat fayle to
no man ne to womman, that thurgh synne
hath mysgeoun fro the righte wey of Jeru-
salem celestial; & this wey is cleped peni-
tence; of which man sholde gladly herknen
& enquire with al his herte; to wyten what
is penitence, and whennes it is cleped peni-
tence, and in how many maneres been the
acciouns or werkynge of penitence, and
how many speces ther been of penitence,
and whiche thynges apertenen and biho-
ven to penitence, and whiche thynges des-
tourben penitence.

SAINTE Ambrose seith, that Peni-
tence is the pleyngynge of man for
the gilt that he hath doon, and na-
moore to do any thyng for which hym
oghte to pleyne. And som doctour seith:
Penitence is the waymentynge of man, that
sorweth for his synne, and pyneth hym-
self for he hath mysdoon. Penitence,
with certeyne circumstances, is verray re-
pentance of a man that halt hymself in
sorwe & oother payne for his gyltes. And
for he shal be verray penitent, he shal first
biwaylen the synnes that he hath doon,
and stidefastly purposen in his herte to
have shrift of mouthe, and to doon satis-
faccioun, and nevere to doon thyng for
which hym oghte moore to biwayle or to
compleyne, & to continue in goode werkes:
or elles his repentance may nat availle. for
as seith Seint Ysidre: He is a japer and
agabber, and no verray repentant, that eft-
soone dooth thyng for which hym oghte
repente. Wepyng, & nat for to stynt to

do synne, may nat availle. But natheles,
men shal hope that every tyme that man
falleth, be it never so ofte, that he may arise
thurgh penitence, if he have grace; but cer-
teinly it is greet doute, for, as seith Seint
Gregorie, Annethe ariseth he out of
synne, that is charged with the charge of
yuel usage. And therefore repentant folk,
that stynte for to synne, and forlete synne
er that synne forlete hem, hooly chirche
holdeth hem siker of hire savacioun. And
he that synneth, & verrailly repenteth hym
in his laste ende, hooly chirche yet hopeth
his savacioun, by the grete mercy of oure
Lord Jhesu Crist, for his repentaunce;
but taak the siker wey.

AND now, sith I have declared yow
what thyng is penitence, now shul
ye understonde that ther been three
acciouns of penitence. The firste accioun
of penitence is, that a man be baptized
after that he hath synned. Seint Augustyn
seith: But he be penitent for his olde syn-
ful lyf, he may nat bigynne the newe clene
lif. For certes, if he be baptized with-
outen penitence of his olde gilt, he recey-
veth the mark of baptesme, but nat the
grace ne the remission of his synnes, til
he have repentance verray. Another de-
faute is this, that men doon deedly synne
after that they han receyved baptesme.
The thridde defeaute is, that men fallen in
venial synnes after hir baptesme, fro day
to day. Therof seith Seint Augustyn, that
Penitence of goode and humble folk is the
penitence of every day.

THE speces of penitence been thre.
That oon of hem is solempne, an-
other is commune, and the thridde
is privee. Thilke penance that is solempne,
is in two maneres; as to be put out of hooly
chirche in lente, for slaughtre of children,
& swich maner thyng. Another is, whan
a man hath synned openly, of which synne
the fame is openly spoken in the contree;
and thanne hooly chirche by juggement de-
streyneth hym for to do open penaunce.
Commune penaunce is that preestes en-
joynen men in certeyn caas; as for to goon,
peraventure, naked in pilgrymages, or bare-
foot. Dryvee penaunce is thilke that men
doon alday for privee synnes, of whiche
they shryve hem prively, and receyve privee
penaunce.

OW shaltow understande what is
bihovely and necessarie to verray
perfit penitence. And this stant on
thre thynges: contricioun of herte, confes-
sioun of mouth, & satisfaccioun. for which
seith Seint John Crisostom, Penitence

destreyneth a man to accepte benygnyly every peyne that hym is enjoyned, with contricioun of herte, and shrift of mouth, with satisfaccioun; & in werkynge of alle manere humylitee. And this is fruytful penitence agayn thre thynges in whiche we wratthe oure Lord Ihesu Crist: this is to seyn, by delit in thynkyng, by recchelesnesse in spekyng, & by wikked synful werkynge. And agayns thise wikkede gyltes is penitence, that may be likned unto a tree.

THE roote of this tree is contricioun, that hideth hym in the herte of hym that is verray repentaunt, right as theroot of a tree hydeth hym in the erthe. Of the roote of contricioun spryngeth a stalke, that bereth braunches and leues of confessioun, & fruyt of satisfaccioun. for which Crist seith in his gospel. Dooth digne fruyt of penitence. for by this fruyt may men knowe this tree, and nat by the roote that is hyd in the herte of man, ne by the braunches, ne by the leues of confessioun. And therfore oure Lord Ihesu Crist seith thus. By the fruyt of hem ye shul knowen hem. Of this roote eek spryngeth a seed of grace, the which seed is mooder of sikernes, and this seed is egre and hoot. The grace of this seed spryngeth of God, thurgh remembrance of the day of doome and on the peynes of helle. Of this matere seith Salomon, that. In the drede of God man forleteth his synne. The heete of this seed is the love of God, & the desiryng of the joye perdurable. This hete draweth the herte of a man to God, and dooth hym haten his synne. for soothly, ther is nothing that savoureth so wel to a child as the milk of his norice, ne nothing is to hym moore abhominable than thilke milk whan it is medled with oother mete. Right so the synful man that loveth his synne, hym semeth that it is to him moost sweete of anythyng; but fro that tyme that he loveth sadly oure Lord Ihesu Crist, and desireth the lif perdurable, ther nys to hym nothing moore abhominable. for soothly, the lawe of God is the love of God; for which David the prophete seith: I have loved thy lawe and hated wikkednesse and hate; he that loveth God kepeth his lawe and his word. This tree saugh the prophete Daniel in spirit, upon the avysoun of the kyng Nabugodonosor, whan he conseyled hym to do penitence. Penance is the tree of lyf to hem that it receyven, & he that holdeth hym in verray penitence is blessed; after the sentence of Salomon.

IN this penitence or contricioun man shal understonde foure thynges; that is to seyn, what is contricioun: and whiche been the causes that moeven a

man to contricioun: and how he sholde be contrit: and what contricioun availleth to the soule. Channe is it thus: that contricioun is the verray sorwe that a man receyvet in his herte for his synnes, with sad purpos to shryve hym, and to do penance, and nevermoore to do synne. And this Seint Bernard. It shal been hevye and grevous, and ful sharpe and poynant in herte. first, for man hath agilt his Lord and his Creatour; and moore sharpe and poynant, for he hath agilt his fader celestial; and yet moore sharpe & poynant, for he hath wratthed and agilt hym that hath delivered us fro the bondes of synne, and fro the crueltee of the devel, and fro the peynes of helle.

THE causes that oghte moeve a man to contricioun been sexe. first, a man shal remembre hym of his synnes; but looke he that thilke remembrance ne be to hym no delit by no wey, but greet shame and sorwe for his gilt. for Job seith: Synful men doon werkes worthy of confessioun. And therfore seith Ezechiel: I wol remembre me alle the yerres of my lyf, in bitternesse of myn herte. And God seith in the Apocalips: Remembreth yow fro whennes that ye been falle. for biforn that tyme that ye synned ye were the children of God, and lymes of the regne of God; but for youre synne ye been woxen thral and foul, and membres of the feend, hate of aungels, sclaundre of holy chirche, and foode of the false serpent; perpetuel matere of the fir of helle. And yet moore foul and abhominable, for ye trespassen so ofte tyme, as dooth the hound that retourneth to eten his speyng. And yet be ye fouler for youre longe continuyng in synne & youre synful usage, for which ye be roten in your synne, as a beest in his dong. Swiche manere of thoughtes maken a man to have shame of his synne, and no delit, as God seith by the prophete Ezechiel: Ye shal remembre yow of youre weyes, & they shul displese yow. Soothly, synnes been the weyes that leden folk to helle.

THE seconde cause that oghte moeve a man to have desdayn of synne is this: that, as seith Seint Peter. Whoso that dooth synne is thral of synne. and synne put a man in greet thraldom. And therfore seith the prophete Ezechiel: I wente sorweful in desdayn of myself. And certes, wel oghte a man have desdayn of synne, and withdrawe hym from that thraldom and vileynye. And lo, what seith Seneca in this matere. He seith thus: Though I wiste that neither God ne man

ne sholde nevere knowe it, yet wolde I have desdayn for to do synne. And the same Seneca also seith: I am born to gretter thynges than to be thral to my body, or than for to maken of my body a thral. Ne a fouler thral may no man ne womman maken of his body, than for to yeven his body to synne. Al were it the fouleste cherl, or the fouleste womman that lyveth, & leest of value, yet is he thanne moore foule and moore in servitude. Evere fro the hyer degree that man falleth, the moore is he thral, and moore to God & to the world vile and abhominable. O goode God! wel oghte man have desdayn of synne; sith that, thurgh synne, ther he was free, now is he maiked bonde. And therfore seith Seint Augustyn: If thou hast desdayn of thy servant, if he agilt or synne, have thou thanne desdayn that thou thyself sholdest do synne. Take reward of thy value, that thou ne be to foul to thyself. Alas! wel oghten they thanne have desdayn to been servaunts and thralles to synne, and soore been ashamed of himself, that God of his endeles goodnesse hath set hem in heigh estaat, or yeven hem wit, strengthe of body, heele, beautee, prosperitee, and boghte hem fro the deeth with his herte blood, that they souknyndely, agayns his gentillesse, quiten hym so vileynsly, to slaughtre of hir owene soules. O goode God! ye wommen that been of so greet beautee, remembreth yow of the proverbe of Salomon, that seith: He likneth a fair womman that is a fool of hire body, lyk to a ryng of gold that were in the groyn of a soughe. for right as a soughe wrotheth in everich ordure, so wrotheth she hire beautee in the styngynge ordure of synne.

THE thridde cause that oghte moeve a man to contricioun, is drede of the day of doome, and of the horrible peynes of helle. for as Seint Jerome seith: At every tyme that me remembreth of the day of doome, I quake; for whan I ete or drynke, or whatso that I do, evere semeth me that the trompe sowneth in myn ere: Riseth up, ye that been dede, & cometh to the juggement. O goode God! muchel oghte a man to drede swich a juggement, Theras we shullen been alle, as Seint Poul seith, biforn the seete of oure Lord Ihesu Crist; wheras he shal make a general congregacioun, wheras no man may been absent. for certes, there availleth noon esoyne ne excusacioun. And nat oonly that oure defautes shullen be jugged, but eek that alle oure werkes shullen openly be knowe. And as seith Seint Bernard: Ther ne shal no pledynge availle, ne no sleighte; we shullen yeven rekenynge of everich ydel word. Ther shul we han a juge that may

nat been deceyved ne corrupt. And why? for certes, alle oure thoghtes been discovered as to hym; ne for preyere ne for meede he shal nat been corrupt. And therfore seith Salomon: The wratthe of God ne wol nat spare no wight, for preyere ne for yifte. And therfore, at the day of doom, ther nys noon hope to escape.

THERFORE, as seith Seint Anselm: ful greet angwyssh shul the synful folk have at that tyme. Ther shal the stierne & wrothe juge sitte above, and under hym the horrible put of helle open to destroyen hym that moot bi knowen his synnes, whiche synnes openly been shewed biforn God and biforn every creature. And on the left syde, mo develes than herte may bithynke, for to harye and drawe the synful soules to the peyne of helle. And withinne the hertes of folk shal be the bityng consience, and withouteforth shal be the world al brennyng. Whider shal thanne the wrecched synful man fle to hiden hym? Certes, he may nat hyden hym; he mooste come forth & shewen hym. for certes, as seith Seint Jerome: The erthe shal casten hym out of hym, and the see also; and the eyr also, that shal be ful of thonder clappes and lightnynges.

NOW soothly, whoso wel remembreth hym of thise thynges, I gesse that his synne shal nat turne hym into delit, but to greet sorwe, for drede of the peyne of helle. And therfore seith Job to God: Suffre, Lord, that I may awhile biwaille, and wepe, er I go withoute returnyng to the derke lond, covered with the derknesse of deeth; to the lond of mysese and of derknesse, whereas is the shadwe of deeth; whereas ther is noon ordure or dinaunce, but grisly drede that evere shal laste. Loo, heere may ye seen that Job preyde respite awhile, to biwepe and waille his trespas; for soothly, oo day of respite is bettre than al the tresor of the world. And forasmuche as a man may acquiten hymself biforn God by penitence in this world, & nat by tresor, therfore sholde he preye to God to yeve hym respite awhile, to biwepe and biwailen his trespas. for certes, al the sorwe that a man myghte make fro the bigynnyng of the world, nys but a litel thyng at regard of the sorwe of helle.

THE cause why that Job clepeth helle the lond of derknesse: understondeth that he clepeth it lond or erthe, for it is stable, and nevere shal faille; derk, for he that is in helle hath defaute of light material. for certes, the derke light, that shal come out of the fyr that evere shal brenne, shal turne hym al to peyne that is in helle; for it sheweth hym to the horrible

develes that hym tormenten. Covered with the derknesse of deeth: that is to seyn, that he that is in helle shal have defaute of the sighte of God; for certes, the sighte of God is the lyf perdurable. The derknesse of deeth, been the synnes that the wretched man hath doon, whiche that des-tourben hym to see the face of God; right as dooth a derk clowde bitwixe us and the sonne. Lond of misese: bycause that ther been thre maneres of defautes, agayn thre thynges that folk of this world han in this present lyf; that is to seyn, honours, de-lices, and riches. Agayns honour, have they in helle shame and confusioun. for wel ye woot that men clepen honour the reverence that man doth to man; but in helle is noon honour ne reverence. for certes, namoore reverence shal be doon there to a kyng than to a knave. for which God seith by the prophete Jeremye: Thilke folk that me despisen shul been in despit. Honour is eek cleped greet lordshipe; ther shal no wight serven oother but of harm & torment. Honour is eek cleped greet dignytee and heighnesse; but in helle shul they been al fortoden of develes. And God seith: The horrible develes shulle goon & comen upon the hevendes of the dampned folk. And this is forasmuche as, the hyer that they were in this present lyf, the moore shulle they been abated & de-fouled in helle. Agayns the riches of this world, shul they han myseuse of pov-erte; and this poverte shal been in foure thynges: in defaute of tresor, of which that David seith: The riche folk that em-braceden and oneden al hire herte to tresor of this world, shul slepe in the slepyng of deeth; & nothyng ne shal they fynden in hir handes of al hire tresor. And moore over, the myseuse of helle shul been in de-faute of mete and drinke. for God seith thus by Moyses: They shul been wasted with hunger, and the briddes of helle shul devouren hem with the bitter deeth, and the galle of the dragon shal been hire drynke, and the venym of the dragon hire morsels. And fortherover, hire myseuse shal been in defaute of clothyng; for they shulle be naked in body as of clothyng, save the fyr in which they brenne and othere filthes; and naked shul they been of soule, of alle manere vertues, which that is the clothyng of the soule. Where been thanne the gayer robes, & the softe shetes, and the smale shertes? Loo, what seith God of hem by the prophete Ysaie: that Under hem shul been strawed motthes, & hire covertures shulle been of wormes of helle. And fortherover, hir myseuse shal been in defaute of freendes; for he nys nat povre that hath goode freendes, but there

is no frend; for neither God ne no crea-ture shal been freend to hem, and everich of hem shal haten oother with deadly hate. The sones and the doghtren shullen re-bellen agayns fader and mooder, and kyn-spisen everich of hem oother, bothe day and nyght, as God seith by the prophete Michias. And the lovyng children, that whilom loveden so flesshly everich oother, mighte. for how sholden they love hem togidre in the peyne of helle, whan they hated ech of hem oother in the prosperi-tee of this lyf? for truste wel, hir flesshly love was deadly hate; as seith the prophete David: Whoso that loveth wikkednesse he hateth his soule. And whoso hateth his owne soule, certes, he may love noon oother wight in no manere. And therfore in helle is no solas ne no freendshipe, but evere the moore flesshly kynredes that been in helle, the moore cursynges, the moore chidynges, and the moore deadly hate ther is among hem.

And fortherover they shul have de-faute of alle manere delices: for certes, delices been after the appo-rites of the five wittes, as sighte, heryng, smellyng, savoryng, & touchyng. But in helle hir sighte shal be ful of derknesse and of smoke, and therfore ful of teeres; and hir heryng, ful of waymentyng and of gryntyng of teeth, as seith Jhesu Crist; hir nosethirles shullen be ful of stynkyng stynk. And as seith Ysaie the prophete: Hir savoryng shal be ful of bit-ter galle. And touchyng of al hir body, ycovered with fir that nevere shal quenche, and with wormes that nevere shul dyen, as God seith by the mouth of Ysaie. And forasmuche as they shul nat wene that they may dyen for peyne, and by hir deeth flee fro peyne, that may they understonden by the word of Job, that seith: There is the shadwe of deeth. Certes, a shadwe hath the liknesse of the thyng of which it is shadwe, but shadwe is nat the same thyng of which it is shadwe. Right so fareth the peyne of helle; it is lyk deeth for the hor-rible angwyssh; and why? for it peyneth hem evere, as though they sholdedye anon; but certes, they shal nat dye. for as seith Seint Gregorie: To wrecche captyves shal be deeth withoute deeth, & ende withoute ende, and defaute withoute failyng. for hir deeth shal alwey tyven, and hir ende shal everemo bigynne, and hir defaute shal nat faille. And therfore seith Seint John the Evaungelist: They shullen fowe deeth, and they shul nat fynde hym; and they shul desiren to dye, and deeth shal flee fro hem.

And eek Job seith: that In helle is noon ordre of rule; & albeit so that God hath creat alle thynges in right ordre, and nothyng withouten ordre, but alle thynges been ordeyned and nombred; yet natheles, they that been dampned been nothyng in ordre, ne holden noon ordre; for the erthe ne shal bere hem no fruyt. for, as the prophete David seith: God shal destroe the fruyt of the erthe as fro hem; ne water ne shal yeve hem no moisture; ne the eyr no refresshing, ne fyr no light. For as seith Seint Basile: The brennyng of the fyr of this world shal God yeven in helle to hem that been damp-ned; but the light and the cleernesse shal be yeven in hevne to his children; right as the goode man yeveth flesch to his chil-dren, and bones to his houndes. And for they shullen have noon hope to escape, seith Seint Job atte laste: that Ther shal horroure & grisly drede dwellen withouten ende.

Horroure is alwey drede of harm that is to come, and this drede shal evere dwelle in the hertes of hem that been dampned; and therfore han they for al hire hope for seven causes. First, for God that is hir juge shal be withouten mercy to hem; and they may nat plesse hym ne noon of his halwes; ne they ne may yeve nothyng for hir raunsoun; ne they have no voya to speke to hym; ne they may nat fle fro peyne; ne they have no goodnesse in hem, that they moweshewe to deliver hem fro peyne. And therfore seith Salomon: The wikked man dyeth; and whan he is deed, he shal have noon hope to escape fro peyne. Whoso thanne wolde wel under-stande these peynes, and bithynke hym weel that he hath deserved thilke peynes for his synnes, certes, he sholde have moore talent to siken and to wepe, than for to syngen & to pleye. for as that seith Salomon: Whoso that hadde the science to knowe the peynes that been establised and ordeyned for synne, he wolde make sorwe. Thilke science, as seith Seint Au-gustyn, maketh a man to waymenten in his herte.

The fourthe point, that oghte maken a man to have contricioun, is the sorweful remembraunce of the good that he hath left to doon here in erthe; & eek the good that he hath lorn. Soothly, the goode werkes that he hath left, outhere they been the goode werkes that he hath wrought er he fel into deadly synne, or elles the goode werkes that he wrought while he lay in synne. Soothly, the goode werkes that he dide bifore that he fil in synne, been al mortefied and astoned and dilled by the ofte synnyng. The othere goode

werkes that he wrought while he lay in deadly synne, thei been outrelly dede as to the lyf perdurable in hevne. Thanne thilke goode werkes that been mortefied by ofte synnyng, whiche goode werkes he dide whil he was in charitee, ne mowen evere quyken agayn withouten verray penitence. And therof seith God, by the mouth of Ezechiel: that, If the rightful man returne agayn from his rightwisnesse and werke wikkednesse, shal he lyve? Nay; for alle the goode werkes that he hath wrought ne shul nevere been in remembrance; for he shal dyen in his synne. And upon thilke chapitre seith Seint Gregorie thus: That we shulle understonde this principally; that whan we doon deadly synne, it is for noght thanne to rehercen or drawn into memorie the goode werkes that we han wrought bifore. For certes, in the werkynge of the deadly synne, ther is no trust to no good werk that we han doon bifore; that is to seyn, as for to have therby the lyf per-durable in hevne. But natheles, the goode werkes quyken agayn, and comen agayn, and helpen, & availen to have the lyf per-durable in hevne, whan we han contricioun. But soothly, the goode werkes that men doon whil they been in deadly synne, forasmuche as they were doon in deadly synne, they may nevere quyken agayn. for certes, thyng that nevere hadde lyf may nevere quykene; and natheles, albeit that they ne availen noght to han the lyf perdurable, yet availen they to abregge of the peyne of helle, or elles to geten temporal richesse, or elles that God wole therather enlumyne and lightne the herte of the synful man to have repentaunce. And eek they availen for to usen a man to doon goode werkes, that the feend have the lasse power of his soule. And thus the curteis Lord Jhesu Crist wole that no good werk be lost; for in somewhat it shal availle. But, forasmuche as the goode werkes that men doon whil they been in good lyf, been al mortefied by synne folwyng; and eek, sith that alle the goode werkes that men doon whil they been in deadly synne, been outrelly dede as for to have the lyf perdurable; wel may that man, that no good werk ne dooth, synge thilke newe frenshe song: Jay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour.

For certes, synne bireveth a man bothe goodnesse of nature and eek the goodnesse of grace. for soothly, the grace of the Hooly Goost fareth lyk fyr, that may nat been ydel; for fyr fayleth anon as it forleteth his wirkyng, & right so grace fayleth anon as it forleteth his werkyng. Then leseth the synful man the goodnesse of glorie, that only is bihight to goode men that labouren and werken.

Wel may he be sory thanne, that oweth al his lif to God, as longe as he hath lyved, and eek as longe as he shal lyve, that no goodnesse ne hath to paye with his dette to God, to whom he oweth al his lyf. for, trust wel: He shal yeven accountes, as seith Seint Bernard, of alle the goodes that han be yeven hym in this present lyf, and how he hath hem despended; insomuche that ther shal nat perisse an heer of his heed, ne a moment of an houre ne shal nat perisse of his tyme, that he ne shal yeve of it a rekenyng.

THE fift the thyng that oghte moeve a man to contricioun, is remembrance of the passiou that oure Lord Jhesu Crist suffred for oure synnes. for, as seith Seint Bernard: Whil that I lyve, I shal have remembrance of the travailes that oure Lord Crist suffred in prechyng; his we-rynesse in travayllyng, his temptaciouns whan he fasted, his longe wakynges whan he preyde, his teeres whan that he wepe for pitee of good peple; the wo and the shame and the filthe that men seyden to hym; of the foulespittynge that men spitte in his face, of the buffettes that men yaven hym, of the foule mowes, and of the repreeves that men to hym seyden; of the nayles with whiche he was nayled to the croys, and of al the remenaunt of his passiou that he suffred for my synnes, and nothyng for his gilt. And yeshul understonde, that in mannes synne is every manere of ordre or ordinaunce turned up/so/doun. for it is sooth, that God, & resoun, and sensualitee, and the body of man, been so ordeyned, that everich of these foure thynges sholde have lordshipe over that oother; as thus: God sholde have lordshipe over resoun, & resoun over sensualitee, and sensualitee over the body of man. But soothly, whan man synneth, al this ordre or ordinaunce is turned up/so/doun. And therfore thanne, forasmuche as the resoun of man ne wol nat be subget ne obeisant to God, that is his lord by right, therfore leseth it the lordshipe that it sholde have over sensualitee, and eek over the body of man. And why? for sensualitee rebelleth thanne agayns resoun; & by that wey leseth resoun the lordshipe over sensualitee and over the body. for right as resoun is rebel to God, right so is bothe sensualitee rebel to resoun and the body also.

AND certes, this disordinaunce & this rebellcioun oure Lord Jhesu Crist aboghte upon his precious body ful deere, and herkneith in which wise. forasmuche thanne as resoun is rebel to God, therfore is man worthy to have sorwe and to be deed. This suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for man, after that he hadde be bi-

trayed of his disciple, & distreyned and bounde. So that his blood brast out at every nayl of his handes, as seith Seint Augustyn. And fortherover, forasmuche as resoun of man ne wol nat daunte sensu-ality to have shame; and this suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for man, whan they open-ly rebel bothe to resoun and to sensualitee, therfore is it worthy the deeth. And this suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for man upon the croys, whereas ther was no part of his body free, withouten greet peyne and bitter passiou.

AND al this suffred Jhesu Crist, that nevere forgeted. And therfore resoun-ably may be said of Jhesu in this manere: To muchel am I peyned for the thynges that I nevere deserved, & to muchel defouled for shendshipe that man is worthy to have. And therfore may the synful man wel seye, as seith Seint Bernard: I cursed be the bitternesse of my synne, for which ther moste be suffred somuchel bitter-nesse. For certes, after the diverse dis-concordaunces of oure wikkednesses, was the passiou of Jhesu Crist ordeyned in diverse thynges, as thus. Certes, synful mannes soule is bitrayed of the devel by covetise of temporel prosperitee, and scorned by deceite whan he cheseth flesch-ly delices; and yet is it tormented by in-pacience of adversitee, and byspet by ser-vage and subjeccioun of synne; and atte laste it is slayn fynally. for this disordina-ance of synful man was Jhesu Crist fyrst bitrayed, and after that was he bounde, that cam for to unbynden us of synne and peyne. Thanne was he byscoined, that con-ly sholde han been honoured in alle thynges & of alle thynges. Thanne was his visage, that oghte be desired to be seyn of al man-kynde, in which visage aungels desiren to looke, vileynsly bispet. Thanne was he scourged that nothyng hadde agilt; and finally, thanne was he crucified and slayn. Thanne was accomplice the word of Ysaie: He was wounded for oure mysdedes, & de-fouled for oure felonies. Now sith that Jhesu Crist took upon hymself the peyne of alle oure wikkednesses, muchel oghte synful man wepen & biwayle, that for his synnes Goddes sone of hevne sholde al this peyne endure.

THE sixte thyng that oghte moeve a man to contricioun, is the hope of thre thynges; that is to seyn, foryif-nesse of synne, and the yifte of grace wel for to do, and the glorie of hevne, with which God shal guerdone a man for his goode dedes.

AND forasmuche as Jhesu Crist yev-eth us these yiftes of his largesse, and of his sovereyn bountee, therfore is he cleped Jhesus Nazarenus, rex Judaeorum. Jhesus is to seyn Saviour or Salvacioun, on whom men shul hope to have foryifnesse of synnes. And therfore prely salvacioun of synnes. Thou shalt seyde the aungel to Joseph: Thou shalt clepen his name Jhesus, that shal save his peple of hir synnes. And heereof seith Seint Peter: Ther is noon oother name un-der hevne that is yeve to any man, by which a man may be saved, but oonly Jhesus. Nazarenus is as muche for to seye as flor-ishyng, in which a man shal hope, that he that yeveth hym remissiou of synnes shal yeve hym eek grace wel for to do. for in the flour is hope of fruyt in tyme comyng; and in foryifnesse of synnes, hope of grace wel for to do. I was atte dore of thyn herte, seith Jhesus, and cleped for to entre; he that openeth to me shal have foryifnesse of synne. I wol entre into hym by my grace, and soupe with hym, by the goode werkes that he shal doon; whiche werkes been the foode of God; and he shal soupe with me, by the grete joye that I shal yeven hym. Thus shal man hope, for his werkes of pen-ance, that God shal yeven hym his regne; as he bihooteth hym in the gospel.

NOW shal a man understonde, in which manere shal been his contricioun. I seye, that it shal been universal and total; this is to seyn, a man shal be verray repentaunt for alle his synnes that he hath doon in delit of his thoght; for delit is ful perilous. for ther been two manere of con-sentynges; that oon of hem is cleped con-sentyng of affeccioun, whan a man is mo-ved to do synne, and deliteth hym longe for to thynke on that synne; and his re-soun aperceyeth it wel, that it is synne agayns the lawe of God, and yet his resoun refreyneth nat his foul delit or talent, though he se wel apertly that it is agayns the reverence of God; although his resoun ne consente noght to doon that synne in dede, yet seyn somme doctours that swich delit that dwelleth longe, it is ful perilous, al be it nevere so lite. And also a man sholde sorwe, namely, for al that evere he hath de-sired agayn the lawe of God with perfit consentynge of his resoun; for therof is no doute, that it is deedly synne in consent-ynge. for certes, ther is no deedly synne that it nas first in mannes thought, & after that in his delit; & so forth into consent-ynge, and into dede. Wherfore I seye, that many men ne repenten hem nevere of swiche thoghtes & delites, ne nevere shry-ven hem of it, but oonly of the dede of grete synnes outward. Wherfore I seye, that

swiche wikked delites & wikked thoghtes been subtil bigileres of hem that shullen be dampned.

AND fortherover, man oghte to sorwe for his wikkede wordes, as wel as for his wikkede dedes; for certes, the repentaunce of a synguler synne, and nat repente of alle his othere synnes, or elles repenten hym of alle his othere synnes & nat of a synguler synne, may nat availle. for certes, God Almyghty is al good; and therfore he foryeveth al, or elles right noght. And heereof seith Seint Augustyn: I woot certeinly that God is enemy to eve-rich synnere; and how thanne? He that ob-serveth o synne, shal he have foryifnesse of the remenaunt of his othere synnes? Nay.

AND fortherover, contricioun sholde be wonder sorweful & angwissous, & therfore yeveth hym God pleynty his mercy; & therfore, whan my soule was angwissous withinne me, I hadde remem-brance of God, that my preyere myghte come to hym. Fortherover, contricioun moste be continuell, & that man have stede-fast purpos to shryven hym, and for to a-menden hym of his lyf. for soothly, whil contricioun lasteth, man may evere have hope of foryifnesse; & of this comth hate of synne, that destroyeth synne bothe in himself, & eek in oother folk, at his power. for which seith David: Ye that loven God hateth wikkednesse. for trusteth wel, to love God is for to love that he loveth, and hate that he hateth.

THE laste thyng that man shal un-derstande in contricioun is this; wherof avayleth contricioun. I seye, that somtyme contricioun delivereth a man fro synne; of which that David seith: I seye, quod David, that is to seyn, I pur-posed fermely to shryve me; & thow, Lord, relesedest my synne. And right so as con-tricioun availleth noght, withouten sad pur-pos of shrifte, if man have oportunitie, right so litel worth is shrifte or satisfac-cioun withouten contricioun. And moore-over contricioun destroyeth the prisoun of helle, and maketh wayk and fieble alle the strengthes of the develes, and restoreth the yiftes of the hooly Goost and of alle goode vertues; and it clenseth the soule of synne, & delivereth the soule fro the peyne of helle, & fro the compaignye of the devel, and fro the servage of synne, & restoreth it to alle goodes espiituels, & to the com-paignye & communyon of hooly chirche.

AND fortherover, it maketh hym that whilom was sone of ire, to be sone of grace; and alle these thynges been preved by hooly writ. And therfore, he that wolde sette his entente to these thynges,

he were ful wys; for soothly, he ne sholde nat thanne in al his lyf have corage to synne, but yeven his body and al his herte to the service of Jhesu Crist, & therof doon hym hommage. for soothly, oure sweete Lord Jhesu Crist hath spared us so debonairly in our folies, that if he ne hadde pitce of mannes soule, a sory song we myghten alle synge.

Explicit prima pars Penitentie; et sequitur secunda pars eiusdem.

THE seconde partie of penitence is confessioun, that is signe of contricioun. Now shul ye understonde what is confessioun, and wheither it oghtenedes be doon or noon, and whiche thynges been covenable to verrey confessioun. First shaltow understonde that confessioun is verrey shewynge of synnes to the preest; this is to seyn, Verray, for he moste confessen hym of alle the condiciouns that bilongen to his synne, as ferforth as he kan. Al moot be seyde, and nothyng excused, nehyde, ne forwrapped, and noght avaunte him of his goode werkes. And fortherover, it is neces-sarie to understonde whennes that synnes spryngen, and how they encreessen, and whiche they been. Of the spryngynge of synnes seith Seint Paul in this wise: that Right as by a man synne entred first into this world, and thurgh that synne deeth, right so thilke deeth entred into alle men that synned. And this man was Adam, by whom synne entred into this world whan he brak the comaundement of God. And therefore, he that first was so myghty that he sholde nat have dyed, bicam swich oon that he moste nedes dye, wheither he wolde or noon; and al his progenye in this world that in thilke man synned.

LOOKIE, that in thestaat of innocence, whan Adam and Eve naked weren in Paradys, and nothyng ne haddn shame of hir nakednesse, how that the serpent, that was moost wily of alle othere beestes that God hadde maked, seyde to the womman: Why comaunded God to yow, ye sholde nat eten of every tree in Paradys? The womman answerde: Of the fruyt, quod she, of the trees in Paradys we feden us, but soothly, of the fruyt of the tree that is in the myddel of Paradys, God forbad us for to ete, ne nat touchen it, lest peraventure we sholde dyen. The serpent seyde to the womman: Nay, nay, ye shul nat dyen of deeth; for sothe, God woot, that what day that ye eten therof, youre eyen shul opene, and ye shul been as goddes, knowynge good and harm.

THE womman thanne saugh that the tree was good to feedynge, and fair to the eyen, and delitable to the sight; and yaf to hire housbonde, and he ete it; anon the eyen of hem bothe opened, naked, they sowde of fige/leves amane of breches, to hiden hire membres. There may ye seen that deedly synne hath first aug- gestiou of the feend, as sheweth heere by the naddre; and afterward, the delit of the flessch, as sheweth heere by Eve; and after that, the consentynge of resoun, as sheweth heere by Adam. for trust wel, Eve, that is to seyn the flessch, & the flessch hadde delit in the beautee of the fruyt de- fended, yet certes, til that resoun, that is to seyn, Adam, consented to the etynge of the fruyt, yet stood he in thestaat of in- nocence. Of thilke Adam tooke we thilke synne original; for of hym flesschly de- scended be we alle, and engendred of vile and corrupt matere. And whan the soule is put in oure body, right anon is contract original synne; & that, that was erst but oonly peyne of concupiscence, is after- ward both peyne and synne. And therefore be we alle born sones of wrathe and of dampnacioun perdurable, if it nere bap- tesme that we receyven, which bynyneth us the culpe; but forsothe, the peyne dwelleth with us, as to temptacioun, which peyne nat we alle have. Whan it is wrong- devel, this is to seyn, the develes bely, with which he bloweth in man the fir of flesschly concupiscence. And after that, a man bi- thynketh hym wheither he wol doon, or no, thilke thing to which he is tempted. And thanne, if that a man withstonde & weyve the firste entisyng of his flessch and of the feend, thanne is it no synne; and if it so be that he do nat so, thanne feelet he anon a flambe of delit. And thanne is it good to be war, and kepen hym wel, or elles he wol falle anon into consentynge of synne; and thanne wol he do it, if he may have tyme & place. And of this matere seith Moyses by the devel in this manere: The feend seith, I wole chace and pursue the man by wikked suggestioun, and I wole hente hym by moevynge or stiryng of synne. I wol departe my prise or my praye by delibera- cioun, and my lust shal been accompliced in delit; I wol drawe my swerd in consent- ynge: for certes, right as a swerd depart- eth a thyng in two peces, right so consent- ynge departeth God from man: And thanne wol I sleen hym with myn hand in dede of synne; thus seith the feend. For certes, thanne is a man al deed in soule. And thus is synne accompliced by temptacioun, by

NO, as for to speken of the firste covetise, that is concupiscence after the lawe of oure membres, that weren lawefulliche ymaked and by rightful jugs- gement of God; I seye, forasmuch as man is nat obeisaunt to God, that is his Lord, therefore is the flessch to hym disobeisaunt thurgh concupiscence, which yet is cleped norrisynge of synne, & occasioun of synne. Therefore, al the while that a man hath in hym the peyne of concupiscence, it is im- possible but he be tempted somtime, and moeved in his flessch to synne. And this thyng may nat faille as longe as he lyveth; it may wel wexe fieble & faille, by vertu of bap- tesme & by the grace of God thurgh peni- tence; but fully ne shal it nevere quenche, that he ne shal somtyme be moeved in hym- self, but if he were alrefreyded by siknesse, or by malefice of sorcerie, or colde drynkkes. for lo, what seith Seint Paul: The flessch coveteth agayn the spirit, and the spirit agayn the flessch, they been so contrarie &

so stryven, that a man may nat alwey doon as he wolde. The same Seint Paul, after his grette penaunce in water and in lond; in his grette penaunce in water and in lond; in greet peyne, in lond, in famyne, in thurst, in coold, and cloothless, and ones stoned almoost to the deeth, yet seyde he: Alas! I, caytyf man, who shal delivere me fro the prisoun of my caytyf body? And Seint Jerome, whan he longe tyme hadde woned in desert, whereas he haddn no compaignye but of wilde beestes, whereas he ne hadde no mete but herbes, & water to his drynke, ne no bed but the naked erthe, for which his flessch was blak as an Ethiopen for heete, & ny destroyed for coold, yet seyde he: that The brennyng of lecherie boyled in al his body. Wherefore, I woot wel syker- ly, that they been deceyved that seyn, that they ne be nat tempted in hir body. Wit- nesse on Seint Jame the Apostel, that seith: that Every wight is tempted in his owne concupiscence; that is to seyn, that overich of us hath matere and occasioun to be tempted of the norrisynge of synne that is in his body. And therefore seith Seint John the evaungelist: If that we seyn that we beth withoute synne, we deceyve us selve, and trouthe is nat in us.

Now shal ye understonde in what ma- nere that synne wexeth or encreeseth in man. The firste thyng is thilke norrisynge of synne, of which I spak bi- fore, thilke flesschly concupiscence. And after that comth the subjecioun of the feend, which he bloweth in man the fir of flesschly concupiscence. And after that, a man bi- thynketh hym wheither he wol doon, or no, thilke thing to which he is tempted. And thanne, if that a man withstonde & weyve the firste entisyng of his flessch and of the feend, thanne is it no synne; and if it so be that he do nat so, thanne feelet he anon a flambe of delit. And thanne is it good to be war, and kepen hym wel, or elles he wol falle anon into consentynge of synne; and thanne wol he do it, if he may have tyme & place. And of this matere seith Moyses by the devel in this manere: The feend seith, I wole chace and pursue the man by wikked suggestioun, and I wole hente hym by moevynge or stiryng of synne. I wol departe my prise or my praye by delibera- cioun, and my lust shal been accompliced in delit; I wol drawe my swerd in consent- ynge: for certes, right as a swerd depart- eth a thyng in two peces, right so consent- ynge departeth God from man: And thanne wol I sleen hym with myn hand in dede of synne; thus seith the feend. For certes, thanne is a man al deed in soule. And thus is synne accompliced by temptacioun, by

delit, and by consentynge; and thanne is the synne cleped actuel.

FORSOthe, synne is in two man- eres; outhere it is venial, or deedly synne. Soothly, whan man loveth any creature moore than Jhesu Crist oure Creatour, thanne is it deedly synne. And venial synne is it, if man love Jhesu Crist lasse than hym oghte. forsothe, the dede of this venial synne is ful perilous; for it amenuseth the love that men sholde han to God moore and moore. And therefore if a man charge hymself with manye swiche ve- nial synnes, certes, but if so be that he som- tyme discharge hym of hem by shrifte, they mowe ful lightly amenuse in hym al the love that he hath to Jhesu Crist; and in this wise shippeth venial into deedly synne, for certes, the moore that a man chargeth his soule with venial synnes, the moore is he enclyned to fallen into deedly synne. And therefore, lat us nat be negli- gent to dischargen us of venial synnes; for the proverbe seith: that Manye smale maken a greet. And herke this ensample. A greet wave of the see comth somtyme with so greet a violence that it drencheth the ship. And the same harm dooth som- tyme the smale dropses of water, that en- tren thurgh a litel crevace into the thurrok, and into the botme of the ship, if men be so negligent that they ne discharge hem nat by tyme. And therefore, although ther be a difference bitwix these two causes of drenchynge, algates the ship is dreynt. Right so fareth it somtyme of deedly synne, and of anoyouse veniale synnes, whan they multiplie in a man so greetly, that thilke worldly thynges that he loveth, thurgh whiche he synneth venially, is as greet in his herte as the love of God, or moore. And therefore, the love of every thyng that is nat biset in God, ne doon principally for Goddes sake, although that a man love it lasse than God, yet is it venial synne; and deedly synne, whan the love of any thyng weyeth in the herte of man as muchel as the love of God, or moore. Deed- ly synne, as seith Seint Augustyn: Is, whan a man turneth his herte fro God, which that is verrey sovereyn bountee, that may nat chaunge, and yeveth his herte to thyng that may chaunge and flitte. And certes, that is every thyng, save God of hevene. for sooth is, that if a man yeve his love, the which that he oweth al to God with al his herte, unto a creature, certes, as muche as he yeveth of his love to thilke creature, so muche he bireveth fro God; and therefore dooth he synne. for he that is dettour to God, ne yeldeth nat to God al his dette, that is to seyn, al the love of his herte.

Now sith man understondeth generally, which is venial synne, thanne is it covenable to tellen specially of synnes whiche that many a man peraventure demeth hem nat synnes, & ne shryveth him nat of the same thynges; and yet natheles they been synnes. Soothly, as this clerkes writen, this is to seyn, that at every tyme that a man eteth or drynketh moore than suffiseth to the sustenance of his body, in certein he dooth synne. And eek whan he speketh moore than nedeth, it is synne. Eke whan he herkneþ nat benignely the compleint of the povre. Eke whan he is in heele of body & wol nat faste, whan othere folk faste, withouten cause resonable. Eke whan he slepeth moore than nedeth, or whan he comth by thilke enchesoun to late to chirche, or to othere werkes of charite. Eke whan he useth his wyf, withouten sovereyn desir of engendrure, to the honour of God, or for the entente to yelde to hys wyf the dette of his body. Eke whan he wol nat visite the sike & the prisoner, if he may. Eke if he love wyf or child, or oother worldly thyng, moore than resoun requireth. Eke if he flater or blandise moore than hym oghte for any necessitee. Eke if he amenuse or withdrawe the almesse of the povre. Eke if he apparailleth his mete moore deliciously than nede is, or ete it to hastily by likeliness. Eke if he tale vanytees at chirche or at Goddes service, or that he be a talker of ydel wordes of folye or of vileynye; for he shal yelden accountes of it at the day of doome. Eke whan he biheteth or assurgeth to do thynges that he may nat performe. Eke whan that he, by lightnesse or folie, mysseyeth or scorneth his neigheboore. Eke whan he hath any wikked suspicioun of thyng, ther he ne woot of it no soothfastnesse. Thise thynges and mo withoute nombre been synnes, as seith Seint Augustyn.

Now shal men understonde that albeit so that noon erthely man mayeschue alle venial synnes, yet may he refreyne hym by the brennyng love that he hath to oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and by preyes and confessioun & othere goode werkes, so that it shal but litel greve. For, as seith Seint Augustyn: If a man love God in swich manere, that al that evere he dooth is in the love of God, & for the love of God verrailly, for he brenneth in the love of God: looke, how muche that a drope of water that falleth in a fourneys ful of fyr anoyeth or greveth, so muche anoyeth a venial synne unto a man that is perfit in the love of Jhesu Crist. Men may also refreyne venial synne by receyvyng worthily of the precious body of Jhesu Crist;

by receyvyng eek of hooly water; by almesse dede; by general confessioun of Confitour at masse and at complyn; & by blessyng of bisshopes & of preestes, & by oother goode werkes.

Explicit secundapars Penitentie. Sequitur de septem peccatis mortalibus, et eorum dependentiis circumstantiis et speciebus.

Now is it bihovely thyng to telle whiche been the deadly synnes, this is to seyn, chief tayne of synnes; alle they renne in o lecs, but in diverse maneres. Now been they cleped chief tayne, forasmuche as they been chief, and spryngers of alle othere synnes. Of the roote of thise seven synnes thanne is pride, the general roote of alle harmes; for of this roote spryngen certein braunches, as ire; envye; accidie or slewthe; avarice or covetise, to commune understondyng: glotony, & lechery. And everich of thise chief synnes hath his braunches and his twigges, as shal be declared in hire chapitres folwyng.

De Superbia.

And thogh so be that no man kan outrely telle the nombre of the twigges & of the harmes that cometh of pride, yet wol I shewe a partie of hem, as yeshul understonde. There is in obedience, avauntynge, ypocrisie, despit, arrogance, impudence, swellynge of herte, insolence, elacioun, incipience, strif, contumacie, presumpcioun, irreverence, pertinacie, veyne glorie; and many another twig that I kan nat declare.

INOBEDIENT, is he that disobeyeth for despit to the comandements of God and to his sovereyns, and to his goostly fader. Avauntour, is he that bosteth of the harm or of the bountee that he hath doon. Ypocrite, is he that hideth to shewe hym swich as he is, and sheweth hym swich as he noght is. Despitous, is he that hath desdeyn of his neigheboore, that is to seyn, of his evene Cristene, or hath despit to doon that hym oghte to do. Arrogant, is he that thynketh that he hath thilke bountees in hym that he hath noght, or weneth that he sholde have hem by his desert; or elles he demeth that hebe that he nys nat. Impudent, is he that for his pride hath no shame of his synnes. Swellynge of herte, is whan a man rejoyseth hym of harm that he hath doon. Insolent, is he that despiseth in his juggement alle othere folk as to regard of his value, and of his konnyng, and of his spekyng, and of his beryng. Elacioun, is whan he ne may neither suffre to have maister ne

felawe. Incipient, is he that wol nat been ytaught ne undernome of his vice, and by strif werreth trouthe wityngly, and by diffendeth his folye. Contumax, is he and diffendeth his indignacioun is agayns that thurgh his indignacioun is agayns that thurgh auctoritee or power of hem that everich auctoritee or power of hem that been his sovereyns. Presumpcioun, is whan a man undertaketh an emprise that hym oghte nat do, or elles that he may nat do; and this is called surquidrie. Irreverence, is whan men do nat honour thereas hem oghte to doon, and waiten to be revered. Pertinacie, is whan man diffendeth his folye, & trusteth to muchel in his owene wit. Veyneglorie, is for to have pompe and delit in his temporeel hynesse, and glorifie hym in this worldly estaat. Tanglyng, is whan men speken to muche biforn folk, & clappen as a mille, and taken no hepe what they seye. And yet is ther a privee spece of pride, that waiteth first to be salewed or he wole saawe, al be he lasse worth than that oother is, peraventure; & eek he waiteth or desireth to sitte, or elles to goon above hym in the wey, or hisse pax, or been encensed, or goon to offryng biforn his neigheboore, & swiche semblable thynges; agayns his duete, peraventure, but that he hath his herte and his entente in swich a proud desir to be magnified and honoured biforn the peple. Now been ther two maneres of pride. That oon of hem is withinne the herte of man, and that oother is withoute; of whiche soothly thise forseyde thynges, & mo than I have seyd, apertenen to pride that is in the herte of man; & that othere speces of pride been withoute. But natheles that oon of these speces of pride is signe of that oother, right as the gaye leefsel atte taverne is signe of the wyn that is in the celer. And this is in manye thynges: as in speche & contenance, and in outrageous array of clothyng; for certes, if ther ne hadde be no synne in clothyng, Crist wolde nat have noted and spoken of the clothyng of thilke richeman in the gospel. And, as seith Seint Gregorie: that Precious clothyng is cowpable for the derthe of it, and for his softenesse, and for his strangenesse and degisynesse, & for the superfluitee, and for the inordinat scantnesse of it. Alas! may men nat seen, as in oure dayes, the synful costlewe array of clothyng, and namely in to muche superfluitee, or elles in to desordinat scantnesse?

AS to the firste synne, that is in superfluitee of clothyng, which that maketh it so deere, to harm of the peple; nat only the cost of embrowdyng, the degise endentyng or barryng, owndyng, palyng, wyndyng or bendyng, and semblable wast of clooth in vanitee;

but ther is also costlewe furringe in hir gownes, so muche pownsonyng of chisels to maken holes, so muche daggyng of sheres; forthwith the superfluitee in lengthe of the forseide gownes, trailyng in the dong and in the mire, on horse & eek on foote, as wel of men as of wommen, that al thilke trailyng is verrailly in effect wasted, consumed, thredbare, and roten with donge, rather than it is yeven to the povre; to greet damage of the forseide povre folk. And that in sondry wise; this is to seyn, that the moore that clooth is wasted, the moore it costeth to the peple for the scantnesse. And fortherover, if so be that they wolde yeven swich pownsoned and dagged clothyng to the povre folk, it is nat convenient to were for hire estaat, ne suffisant to beete hire necessitee, to kepe hem fro the distemperance of the firmament.

UPON that oother side to speken of the horrible disordinat scantnesse of clothyng, as been thise kuttid sloppes or haynselyns, that thurgh hire shortnesse ne covere nat the shameful membres of man, to wikked entente. Alas! somme of hem shewen the boce of hir shap, & the horrible swollen membres, that semeth lik the maladie of hirmia, in the wrappyng of hir hoses; and eek the buttoles of hem faren as it were the hyndre part of a sheape in the fulle of the moone. And mooreover the wretched swollen membres that they shewe thurgh the degisynge, in departyng of hire hoses in whit and reed, semeth that half hir shameful privee membres weren flayne. And if so be that they departen hire hoses in othere colours, as is whit and blak, or whit and blew, or blak and reed, and so forth; thanne semeth it, as by variaunce of colour, that half the partie of hire privee membres were corrupt by the fir of Seint Antony, or by cancre, or by oother swich meschaunce. Of the hyndre part of hir buttoles, it is ful horrible for to see. For certes, in that partie of hir body theras they purgen hir stynkyng ordure, that foule partie shewe they to the peple proudly in despit of honestitee, the which honestitee that Jhesu Crist and his freendes observede to shewen in hir lyve.

Now of the outrageous array of wommen, God woot, that though the visages of somme of hem seme ful chaast and debonaire, yet notifie they in hire array of atyr, likerousnesse and pride. I sey nat that honestitee in clothyng of man or womman is uncovenable, but certes the superfluitee or disordinat scantitee of clothyng is reprevable. Also the synne of aornement or of apparaille is in thynges that apertenen to ridyng, as in to manye

delicat horses that been hoolden for delit, that been so faire, fatte, and costlewe; and also to many a vicious knave that is sustened by cause of hem; in to curious harneys, as in sadeles, in crouperes, peytrels, and bridles covered with precious clothynge and riche, barres and plates of gold and of silver, for which God seith by Zakarie the prophete: I wol confounde the riders of swiche horses. This folk taken litel reward of the ridynge of Goddes sone of hevne, and of his harneys whan he rood upon the asse, and ne hadde noon oother harneys but the povre clothes of his disciples; ne we ne rede nat that ever he rood on oother beest. I speke this for the synne of superfluitee, and nat for resonable honestitee, whan reson it requireth.

AND forther, certes pride is greetly notified in holdynge of greet meynee, whan they be of litel profit or of right no profit. And namely, whan that meynee is felonous and damageous to the peple, by hardynesse of heigh lordshipe, or by wey of offices, for certes, swiche lordes sellen thanne hir lordshipe to the devel of helle, whanne they sustenen the wikkednesse of hir meynee. Or elles whan this folk of lowe degree, as thilke that holden hostelryes, sustenen the theft of hire hostilers, and that is in many manere of deceites. Thilke manere of folk been the flyes that folwen the honey, or elles the houndes that folwen the careyne. Swich forseide folk stranglen spiritually hir lordshipes; for which thus seith David the prophete: Wikked deeth moote come upon thilke lordshipes, and God yve that they moote descenden into helle al doun; for in hire houses been iniquitees and shrewednesses, and nat God of hevne. And certes, but if they doon amendement, right as God yaf his benysoun to Laban by the service of Jacob, and to Pharaon by the service of Joseph, right so God wol yve his malisoun to swiche lordshipes as sustenen the wikkednesse of hir servants, but if they come to amendement.

PRIDE of the table appereth eek ful ofte; for certes, riche men been cleped to festes, & povre folk been put away and rebuked. Also in excesse of diverse metes and drynkes; and namely, swiche manere bake/metes & dissh/metes brennyng of wilde fir, and peynted and castelled with papir, and semblable wast; so that it is abusoun for to thynke. And eek in to greet preciousnesse of vessel and curiositee of mynstralcie, by whiche a man is stired the moore to delices of luxurie, if so be that he sette his herte the lasse upon oure Lord Jhesu Crist, certeyn it is a synne; and certainly the delices myghte been so

grete in this caas, that man myghte lightly falle by hem into deedly synne. The es- and to be liberal, that is to seyn, large by mesure; for thilke that passeth mesure is folie and synne. Another is, to remembre hym of bountee that he of oother folk hath receyved. Another is, to be benigne to his goode subgetis; wherfore, as seith Senek: Ther is nothing moore covenable to a man of heigh estaat, than debonairetee & pitee. And therfore thise flyes that men clepeth bees, whan they maken hir kyng, they cheesen oon that hath no prikke wherwith hemay styng. Another is, a man to have a noble herte and a diligent, to attayne to a heighe vertuose thynges. Now certes, a man to pride hym in the goodes of grace is eek an outrageous folie; for thilke yifte of grace that sholde have turned hym to goodnesse and to medicine, turneth hym to venym and to confusioun, as seith Seint Gregorie. Certes also, whoso prideth hym in the goodes of fortune, he is a ful greet fool; for somtyme is a man a greet lord by the morwe, that is a caytyf and a wrecche er it be nyght; and somtyme the riches of a man is cause of his deth; somtyme the delices of a man is cause of the grevous maladye thurgh which he dyeth. Certes, the commendacioun of the peple is somtyme ful fals and ful brotel for to triste; this day they preyse, to morwe they blame. God woot, desir to have commendacioun of the peple hath caused deeth to many a biy man.

NOw myghte men axe wherof that I seye: somtyme it spryngeth, and the goodes of nature, and somtyme of the goodes of fortune, and somtyme of the goodes of grace. Certes, the goodes of nature stonden outher in goodes of body or in goodes of soule. Certes, goodes of body been heele of body, as strengthe, deliveresse, beautee, gentrie, franchise. Goodes of nature of the soule been good wit, sharpe understondynge, subtilengyn, vertu natureel, good memorie. Goodes of fortune been riches, hygh degrees of lordshipes, preisynges of the peple. Goodes of grace been science, power to suffre spirituel travaille, benignitee, virtuous contemplacioun, withstondynge of temptacioun, and semblable thynges. Of which forseide goodes, certes, it is a ful greet folye a man to priden hym in any of hem alle. Now as for to speken of goodes of nature; God woot that somtyme we han hem in nature as muche to oure damage as to oure profit. As for to speken of heele of body; certes, it passeth ful lightly, and eek it is ful ofte enchesoun of the sickness of oure soule; for God woot, the flesh is a ful greet enemy to the soule; and therefore, the moore that the body is hool, the moore be we in peril to falle. Eke for to pride hym in his strengthe of body, it is an heigh folye; for certes, the flesh coveteth agayn the spirit, & ay the moore strong that the flesh is, the sorer may the soule be: and, overal this, strengthe of body and worldly hardynesse causeth ful ofte many a man to peril and meschaunce. Eek for to pride hym of his gentrie is ful greet folie; for ofte tyme the gentrie of the body bynnyeth the gentrie of the soule; & eek we ben alle of o fader & of o modere; and alle we been of o nature, roten and corrupt, bothe riche and povre. Forsothe, o manere gentrie is for to preise, that appaileth mannes corage with vertues and moralitees, and maketh hym Cristes child, for truste wel, that over what man that synne hath maistrise, he is a verray chert to synne.

NOw been ther generale signes of gentillesse; as eschewynge of vice and ribaudye and servage of synne.

in word, in werk, and contenance; and usynge vertu, curteisye, and clenness; and to be liberal, that is to seyn, large by mesure; for thilke that passeth mesure is folie and synne. Another is, to remembre hym of bountee that he of oother folk hath receyved. Another is, to be benigne to his goode subgetis; wherfore, as seith Senek: Ther is nothing moore covenable to a man of heigh estaat, than debonairetee & pitee. And therfore thise flyes that men clepeth bees, whan they maken hir kyng, they cheesen oon that hath no prikke wherwith hemay styng. Another is, a man to have a noble herte and a diligent, to attayne to a heighe vertuose thynges. Now certes, a man to pride hym in the goodes of grace is eek an outrageous folie; for thilke yifte of grace that sholde have turned hym to goodnesse and to medicine, turneth hym to venym and to confusioun, as seith Seint Gregorie. Certes also, whoso prideth hym in the goodes of fortune, he is a ful greet fool; for somtyme is a man a greet lord by the morwe, that is a caytyf and a wrecche er it be nyght; and somtyme the riches of a man is cause of his deth; somtyme the delices of a man is cause of the grevous maladye thurgh which he dyeth. Certes, the commendacioun of the peple is somtyme ful fals and ful brotel for to triste; this day they preyse, to morwe they blame. God woot, desir to have commendacioun of the peple hath caused deeth to many a biy man.

Remedium contra peccatum Superbie.

NOw sith that so is, that yehan understonde what is pride, & whiche been the spes of it, and whennes pride sourdeth & spryngeth; now shul we understonde which is the remedie agayns the synne of pride, & that is, humylitee or mekenesse. That is a vertu thurgh which a man hath verray knoweleche of hymself, & holdeth of hymself no pris nedeyntee as in regard of his desertes, consideringe evere his freletee. Now been ther thre maneres of humylitee; as humylitee in herte, and another humylitee in his mouth, the thridde in his werkes. The humylitee in herte is in foure maneres: that oon is, whan a man holdeth hymself as noght worth bifore God of hevne. Another is, whan he ne despiseth noon oother man. The thridde is, whan he rekketh nat though men holde hym noght worth. The ferthe is, whan he nyss nat sory of his humilacioun. Also, the humylitee of mouth is in foure thynges: in attempre speche, & in humblesse of speche; and whan he bi-knoweth with his owene mouth that he is

swich as hym thynketh that he is in his herte. Another is, whan he preiseth the bountee of another man, & nothyng therof amenuseth. Humilitee eek in werkes is in foure maneres: the firste is, whan he putteth othere men bifore hym. The seconde is, to chese the loweste place over al. The thridde is, gladly to assente to good conseil. The ferthe is, to stonde gladly to the award of his sovereyns, or of hym that is in hyer degree; certein, this is a greet werk of humylitee.

Sequitur de Invidia.

AFTER pride wol I speken of the foule synne of envye, which is, as by the word of the philosophre, sorwe of oother mannes prosperitee; & after the word of Seint Augustyn, it is sorwe of oother mannes wele, and joye of othere mannes harm. This foule synne is platly agayns the Hooly Goost. Albeit so that every synne is agayns the Hooly Goost, yet natheles, forasmuche as bountee aperteneth proprely to the Hooly Goost, & envye comth proprely of malice, therefore it is proprely agayn the bountee of the Hooly Goost.

NOw hath malice two spes, that is to seyn, hardnesse of herte in wikkednesse, or elles the flesh of man is so blynd, that he considereth nat that he is in synne, or rekketh nat that he is in synne; which is the hardnesse of the devel. That oother spece of malice is, whan a man werreyeth trouthe, whan he woot that it is trouthe. And eek, whan he werreyeth the grace that God hath yve to his neighbore; & al this is by envye. Certes, thanne is envye the worste synne that is, for soothly, alle othere synnes been somtyme oonly agayns o special vertu; but certes, envye is agayns alle vertues, and agayns alle goodneses; for it is sory of alle the bountees of his neighbore; and in this manere it is divers from alle othere synnes. For wel unnethe is ther any synne that it ne hath som delit in itself, save oonly envye, that evere hath in itself angwissh and sorwe.

The spes of envye been thise: ther is first, sorwe of oother mannes goodnesse and of his prosperitee; and prosperitee is kyndely matere of joye; thanne is envye a synne agayns kynde. The seconde spece of envye is joye of oother mannes harm; & that is proprely lyk to the devel, that evere rejoyseth hym of mannes harm.

Of thise two spes comth bakbitynge; and this synne of bakbitynge or detraction hath certein spes, as thus. Som man preiseth his neighbore

by a wikke entente; for he maketh alwey a wikked knotte atte laste ende. Alwey he maketh a But, atte laste ende, that is digne of moore blame, than worth is al the preisynge. The seconde spece is, that if a man be good, & dooth or seith a thing to good entente, the bakbiter wol turne all thilke goodnesse up so, down, to his shrewed entente. The thridde is, to amenuse the bountee of his neighebor. The fourthe spece of bakbityng is this; that if men speke goodnesse of a man, thanne wol the bakbiter seyn: Pardee! swich a man is yet bet than he; in dispreisynge of hym that men preise. The fiftte spece is this; for to consente gladly & herkne gladly to the harm that men speke of oother folk. This synne is ful greet, and ay encreeseth after the wikked entente of the bakbiter. After bakbityng cometh grucchyng or murmuracioun; and somtyme it spryngeth of impaciencie agayns God, & somtyme agayns man. Agayns God it is, whan a man gruceth agayn the peynes of helle, or agayns poverté, or los of catel, or agayn reyn or tempest; or elles gruceth that shrewes han prosperitee, or elles for that goode men han adversitee. And alle thise thinges sholde men suffre patiently, for they comen by the rightful juggement and ordinance of God. Somtyme comth grucching of avarice; as Judas gruced agayns the Magdaleyne, whan she enoynte the heved of oure Lord Jhesu Crist with hir precious oynement. This maner murmure is swich as whan man gruceth of goodnesse that hymself dooth, or that oother folk doon of hir owene catel.

SOMTyme comth murmure of pride; as whan Simon the Pharisee gruced agayn the Magdaleyne, whan she approached to Jhesu Crist, and weep at his feet for hire synnes. And somtyme grucchyng sourdeth of envye; whan men discovereth a mannes harm that was pryvee, or bereth hym on hond thyng that is fals.

MARMURE eek is ofte amonges servaunts that grucchen whan hir sovereyns bidden hem doon leveful thynges; and, forasmuche as they dar nat openly withseye the comaundements of hir sovereyns, yet wol they seyn harm, and grucche, and murmure prively, for verray despit; which wordes men clepen: The develes Pater noster, though so be that the devel ne hadde nevere Pater noster, but that lewed folk yeven it swich a name. Somtyme grucchyng comth of ire, or prive hate, that norisseth rancour in herte, as afterward I shal declare. Thanne cometh eek bitternesse of herte; thurgh which bitternesse every good dede of his neighebor semeth to hym bitter and

unsavory. Thanne cometh discord, that unbyndeth alle manere of freendshipe. Thanne comth scornynge, as whan a man seketh occasioun to anoyen his neighebor, al do he never so weel. Thanne comth accusinge, as whan a man seketh occasioun to anoyen his neighebor, which that is lytly nyght and day to accusen us alle. Thanne comth malignitee, thurgh which a man anoyeth his neighebor prively if he may; & if he noght may, algate his wikked wil ne shal nat wante, as for to brennen his hous pryvely, or empoysone or steen his beestes, and semblable thynges.

Remedium contra peccatum Invidie.

I wol I speke of the remedie agayns the foule synne of envye, first, is the lovynge of God principal, & lovynge of his neighebor as hymself, for soothly, that oon ne may nat been withoute that oother. And truste wel, that in the name of thy neighebor thou shalt understonde the name of thy brother; for certes, alle we have o fader fleschly, and o mooder, that is to seyn, Adam and Eve; and eek o fader espyrituel, and that is God of hevne. Thy neighebor artow holden for to love, & wilne hym alle goodnesse; and therfore seith God: Love thy neighebor as thyself; that is to seyn, to salvacioun of lyf & of soule. And moore-over, thou shalt love hym in word, & in benigne amonestynge, and chastisyng; and conforten hym in his anoyes, and preyre for hym with al thyne herte. And in dede thou shalt love hym in swich wise that thou shalt doon to hym in charitee as thou woldest that it were doon to thyne owene persone. And therefore, thou ne shalt doon hym no damage in wikked word, ne harm in his body, ne in his catel, ne in his soule by enisynge of wikked ensample. Thou shalt nat desiren his wyf, ne none of his thynges. Understood eek, that in the name of neighebor is comprehended his enemy. Certes man shal loven his enemy by the comaundement of God; & soothly, thy freend shaltow love in God. I seye, thyne enemy shaltow love for Goddes sake, by his comaundement. for if it were reson that a man shold nat haten his enemy, forsothe God noldenatreceyven us to his love that been his enemyes. Agayns thre manere of wronges that his enemy dooth to hym, he shal doon thre thynges, as thus. Agayns hate & rancour of herte, he shal love hym in herte. Agayns chidyng and wikked wordes, he shal preyre for his enemy. And agayn wikked dede of his enemy, he shal doon hym bountee. for Crist seith: Loveth youre enemyes, & preyre

eth for hem that speke yow harm; and eek for hem that yow chacen & pursuwen, and dooth bountee to hem that yow haten. Lo, thus comaundeth us oure Lord Jhesu Crist to do to oure enemyes. for soothly, nature dryveth us to loven oure freendes, and parfy, oure enemyes han moore nede to love than oure freendes; and they that moore nede have, certes, to hem shal men doon goodnesse; and certes, in thilke dede have we remembrance of the love of Jhesu Crist, that deyde for his enemyes. And inasmuche as thilke love is the moore grevous to perfourne, insomuche is the moore gretter the merite; & therfore the lovynge of our enemy hath confounded the venym of the devel, for right as the devel is discomfited by humylitee, right so is he wounded to the deeth by love of oure enemy. Certes, thanne is love the medicine that casteth out the venym of envye from mannes herte. The speces of this paas shullen be moore largely in hir chapitres folwyng declared.

Sequitur de Ira.

AFTER envye wol I discryven the synne of ire. for soothly, whoso hath envye upon his neighebor, anon he wole comunly fynde hym a matere of wratthe, in word, or in dede, agayns hym to whom he hath envye. And as wel comth ire of pride as of envye; for soothly, he that is proude or envyous is lightly wrooth. This synne of ire, after the discryvyng of Seint Augustyn, is wikked wil to been avenged by word or by dede. Ire, after the philosophe, is the fervent blood of man quyked in his herte, thurgh which he wole harm to hym that he hateth. for certes, the herte of man, by eschawfynge & moevynge of his blood, wexeth so trouble, that he is out of alle juggement of resoun. But ye shal understonde that ire is in two maneres; that oon of hem is good, & that oother is wikked. The goode ire is by jalousie of goodnesse, thurgh which a man is wrooth with wikkednesse and agayns wikkednesse; & therfore seith a wys man: that Ire is bet than pley. This ire is with debonairetee, and it is wrooth withouten bitternesse; nat wrooth agayns the man, but wrooth with the mysdede of the man; as seith the prophete David: Irascimini et nolite peccare.

Understondeth, that wikked ire is in two maneres, that is to seyn, sodeyn ire, or hastif ire, withouten amysment & consentynge of resoun. The menyng and the sens of this is, that there soun of man ne consente nat to thilke sodeyn ire; & thanne it is venial. Another

ire is ful wikked, that comth of felonie of herte avysed and cast biforn; with wikked wil to do vengeance, and therto his resoun consenteth; and soothly, this is dedly synne. This ire is so displeasent to God, that it troubleth his hous and chaceth the hooly Goost out of mannes soule, and wasteth and destroyeth the liknesse of God, that is to seyn, the vertu that is in mannes soule; and put in hym the liknesse of the devel, and bynymeth the man fro God that is his rightful lord. This ire is a ful greet plesauce to the devel; for it is the develes fourneys, that is eschawfed with the fir of helle. for certes, right so as fir is moore mighty to destroyen erthely thynges than any oother element, right so ire is myghty to destroyen alle spirituel thynges.

LOOKE how that fir of smalegleedes, that been almoost dede under asshen, wollen quike agayn whan they been touched with brymston. Right so ire wol everemo quyken agayn, whan it is touched by the pride that is covered in mannes herte. for certes, fir ne may nat comen out of nothyng, but if it were first in the same thyng naturely; as fir is drawn out of flyntes with steel. And, right so as pride is oftetye matere of ire, right so is rancour norice and keper of ire. Ther is a maner tree, as seith Seint Ysidre, that whan men maken fir of thilke tree, and covere the coles of it with asshen, soothly the fir of it wol lasten al a yeer or moore. And right so fareth it of rancour; whan it is ones conceyved in the hertes of som men, certein it wol lasten peraventure from oon Estre/day unto another Estre/day, and moore. But certes, thilke man is ful fer fro the mercy of God al thilke while.

In this forseide develes fourneys ther forgen thre shrewes: pride, that ay bloweth & encreeseth the fir by chidyng & wikked wordes. Thanne stant envye, and holdeth the hooten iren upon the herte of man with a peire of longe toonges of long rancour. And thanne stant the synne of contumelie or strif & cheeste, and batereth and forgeth by vileyns reprevynges. Certes, this cursed synne anoyeth bothe to the man hymself and eek to his neighebor. for soothly, almoost al the harm that any man dooth to his neighebor comth of wratthe. for certes, outrageous wratthe dooth al that evere the devel hym comaundeth; for he ne spareth neither Crist, ne his sweete mooder. And in his outrageous anger and ire, alas! alas! ful many oon at that tyme feelet in his herte ful wikkedly, both of Crist and of alle his halwes. Is nat this a cursed vice? Yis, certes. Alas! it bynymeth from man

his wit and his resoun, and al his debonaire lif espiroteel, that sholde kepen his soule. Certes, it bynymeth eek Goddes due lordshipe, and that is mannes soule, & the love of his neighbores. It stryvet eek alday agayn trouthe. It reveteth hym the quiete of his herte, and subverteth his soule.

Of ire comen these stynkyng engendures: first hate, that is cold wratthe; discord, thurgh which a man forsaketh his olde freend that he hath lovede ful longe. And thanne cometh werre, and every manere of wrong that man dooth to his neighbore, in body or in catel. Of this cursed synne of ire cometh eek manslaughter. And understonde wel, that homicide, that is manslaughter, is in diverse wise. Som manere of homicide is spiritu- el, and som is bodily.

SPIRITUEEL manslaughter is in sixe thynges. First, by hate; as Seint John seith: He that hateth his brother is homycide. Homycide is eek by bakbitynge; of whiche bakbiters seith Salomon: that They han two swerdes with whiche they sleen hire neighbores. For soothly, as wikke is to bynyme his good name, as his lyf. Homycide is eek in yevynge of wikked conseil by fraude; as for to yeven conseil to areysen wrongful custumes and taillages. Of whiche seith Salomon: Leoun rorynge and bere hongry been like to the cruell lordshipes, in withholdynge or abreggyng of the shepe, or the hyre, or of the wages of servaunts, or elles in usure or in withdrawynge of the almesse of poure folk. For which the wise man seith: fedeth hym that almoost dyeth for honger. For soothly, but if thou feede hym, thou sleest hym; and alle these been deedly synnes. Bodily manslaughter is, when thou sleest him with thy tonge in oother manere; as when thou comandest to sleen a man, or elles yevest hym conseil to sleen a man.

MANSLAUGHTRE in dede is in foure maneres. That oon is by lawe; right as a justice dampneth hym that is coupable to the deeth. But lat the justice be war that he do it rightfully, and that he do it nat for delit to spille blood, but for kepyng of rightwisnesse. Another homycide is, that is doon for necessitye, as when o man sleeth another in his defendaunt, & that he ne may noon ootherwise escape from his owene deeth. But certeinly, if he may escape withouten manslaughter of his adversarie, & sleeth hym, he dooth synne, and he shal bere penance as for deedly synne. Eek if a man, by caas or aventure, shete an arwe or caste a stoon with which he sleeth a man, he is homycide. Eek if a womman by negligence overlyeth

hir child in hir slepyng, it is homycide and deedly synne. Eek when man destour- eth concepcioun of a child, and maketh a womman outhere bareyne by drynkynge venenouse herbes, thurgh which she may nat conceyve, or sleeth a child by drynkynge wilfully, or elles putteth certein material thynges in hire secree places to sleer the child; or elles dooth unkyndely synne, by which man or womman shedeth hire nature in manere or in place theras a child may nat be conceived; or elles, if a woman have conceyved and hurt herself, and sleeth the child, yet it is homycide. What seye we eek of wommen that morden hir children for drede of worldly shame? Certes, an horrible homicide. Homycide is eek if a man approcheth to a womman by desir of lecherie, thurgh which the child is perished, or elles smyteth a womman wityngly, thurgh which she leseth hir child. Alle these been homycides and horrible deedly synnes.

ET comen ther of ire manye mo synnes, as wel in word, as in thought & in dede; as he that arreteth upon God, or blameth God, of thyng of which he is hymself gilty; or despiseth God and alle his halwes, as doon these cursed hasardours in diverse contrees. This cursed synne doon they, when they feelen in hir hertes ful wikkedly of God and of his halwes. Also, when they treten unreverently the sacrament of the auter. Thilke synne is so greet, that unnethe may it been relessed, but that the mercy of God passeth alle his werkis; it is so greet, and he so benigne.

THANNE comth of ire, attrayng; when a man is sharply amonested in his shrifte to forleten his synne, thanne wole he be angry and answeren bokerly and angrily, and deffenden or excuse his synne by unstedfastnesse of his flessch; or elles he dide it for to holde compaignye with his felawes; or elles, he seith, the fend enticed hym; or elles he dide it for his youthe; or elles his compleccioun is so corageous, that he may nat forbere; or elles it is his destinee, as he seith, unto a certain age; or elles, he seith, it cometh hym of gentillesse of his auncestres; and sem- blable thynges. Alle this manere of folk so wrappen hem in hir synnes, that they ne wol nat delivere hemself, for soothly, no wight that excuseth hym wilfully of his synne may nat been delivered of his synne, til that he mekely biknoweth his synne.

AFTER this, thanne cometh sweryng, that is expres agayn the comandement of God; and this bifalleth ofte of anger and of ire. God seith: Thou shalt nat take the name of thy Lord God in veyn,

or in ydel. Also oure Lord Jhesu Crist seith, by the word of Seint Mathew: Nolite jurare omnino: Ne wol ye nat swere in alle manere; neither by hevne, for it is Goddes trothe; ne by erthe, for it is the citee of his feet; ne by Jerusalem, for it is the bench of his greet kyng; ne be thyne heed, for thou mayest nat make an heer whit ne blak. But seyth by youre word, Ye, ye, and Nay, nay; and what that is moore, it is of yvel, nay; and what that is Cristes sake, ne swereth seith Crist. For Cristes sake, ne swereth nat so synfully, in dismembryng of Crist by soule, herte, bones, & body. For certes, it semeth that ye thynke that the cursede Jewes ne dismembred nat ynough the precious persone of Crist, but ye disembre crouse persone of Crist, and if so be that the lawe com- hym moore. And if so be that the lawe com- pelle yow to swere, thanne rule yow after the lawe of God in youre sweryng, as seith Jeremye, quarto capitulo: Jurabis in veritate, in judicio et in justicia: thou shalt tate, in judicio et in justicia; thou shalt kepe thre condicions; thou shalt swere in trouthe, in doom, and in rightwisnesse. This is to seyn, thou shalt swere soothly; for every lesynge is agayns Crist; for Crist is verray trouthe. And thynk wel this, that every greet swerere, nat compelled lawe- fully to swere, the wounde shal nat departe from his hous whil he useth swich unleve- ful sweryng. Thou shalt sweren eek in doom, when thou art constreyned by thy domesman to witnessen the trouthe. Eek thou shalt nat swere for envye, ne for fa- vour, ne for meede, but for rightwisnesse; & for declaracioun of it, to the worship of God and helpyng of thyne evene Cris- tene. And therfore, every man that taketh Goddes name in ydel, or falsly swereth with his mouth, or elles taketh on hym the name of Crist, to be called a Cristene man, and lyveth agayns Cristes lyvyng and his techynge, alle they taken Goddes name in ydel.

LOKE eek what seint Peter seith, Actuum quarto capitulo: Non est aliud nomen sub celo, etc. Ther nys noon oother name, seith Seint Peter, under hevne, yeven to men, in which they mowe be saved. That is to seyn, but the name of Jhesu Crist. Take kepe eek how that the precious name of Crist, as seith Seint Paul ad Philipenses secundo: In no- mine Jhesu, etc.: that In the name of Jhesu every kne of hevenely creatures, or ethely, or of helle, sholden bowe. For it is so heigh and so worshipful that the cursede fend in helle sholde tremblen to heeren it ymyned. Thanne semeth it, that men that sweren so horribly by his blessed name, that they despise hym moore booldely than dide the cursede Jewes, or elles the devel, that trembleth when he heareth his name.

NO certes, sith that sweryng, but if it be lawefully doon, is so heighly deffended, muche worse is forsweryng falsly, and yet nedelees.

WHAT seye we eek of hem that deliten hem in sweryng, and holden it a gentrie or a manly dede to swere grete othes? And what of hem that, of verray usage, ne cesse nat to swere grete othes, al be the cause nat worth a straw? Certes, it is horrible synne. Sweryng so- deynly, withoute avysement, is eek a synne. But lat us go now to thilke horrible sweryng of adjuracioun and conjuracioun, as doon these false enchauntours or nigro- manciens, in bacyns ful of water, or in a bright swerd, in a cerle, or in a fir, or in a shulder-boon of a sheepe. I kan nat seye but that they doon cursedly and damna- bly, agayns Crist and al the feith of hooly chirche.

WHAT seye we of hem that bileeven in divynales, as by flight or by noyse of briddes, or of beestes, or by sort, by geomancie, by dremes, by chirkyng of dores, or crakyng of houses, by gnawynge of rattes, and swich manere wrecchednesse? Certes, al this thyng is deffended by God, and by al hooly chirche. For which they been acursed til they come to amendement, that on swich filthe setten hire bileve. Charms for woundes or ma- ladiie of men, or of beestes, if they taken any effect, it be peraventure that God suf- freth it, for folk sholden yeve the moore feith and reverence to his name. Now wol I speken of lesynges, which generally is fals signyficacioun of word, in entente to deceyven his evene cristene. Some lesynge is, of which ther comth noon advantage to no wight; and some lesynge turneth to the ese and profit of o man, and to disese and damage of another man. Another lesynge is for to saven his lyf or his catel. Another lesynge comth of delit for to lye, in which delit they wol forge a long tale, & peynten it with alle circumstaunces, where al the ground of the tale is fals. Som lesynge comth for he wole sustene his word; & som lesynge comth of recchelesnesse, with- outen avysement; and semblable thynges.

LET us now touche the vice of flat- eryng, which ne comth nat glad- ly, but for drede, or for covetise. Flaterie is generally wrongful preisyng. Flateres been the develes norices, that norissen his children with milk of losen- gerie. forsothe, Salomon seith: that flat- erie is wors than detraccioun. For som- tyme detraccioun maketh an hauteyn man be the moore humble, for he dredeth de- traccioun; but certes, flaterie, that maketh a man to enchauncen his herte and his con-

tenaunce. flatereres been the develes enchauntours; for they make a man to wene of hymself belyk that he nys nat lyk. They been lyk to Judas, that bitrayed God; and thise flaterers bitrayen a man to sellen hym to his enemy, that is, to the devel. flatereres been the develes chapelleyns, that syngen evere Placebo. I rekene flaterie in the vices of ire; for ofte tyme, if o man be wrooth with another, thanne wole he flaterer som wight to sustene hym in his querele.

SPEKE we now of swich cursynge as comth of irous herte. Malisoun generally may be seyd every maner power or harm. Swich cursynge bireveth man fro the regne of God, as seith Seint Paul. And ofte tyme swich cursynge wrongfully retorneth agayn to hym that curseth, as a bryd that retorneth agayn to his owene nest. And over alle thyng men oghten eschewe to cursen hire children, & yeven to the devel hire engendrure, as ferforth as in hem is; certes, it is greet peril and greet synne.

LET us thanne speken of chidyng and reproche, whiche been ful grete woundes in mannes herte; for they unsowen the semes of frendshipe in mannes herte. for certes, unnethes may a man pleynly been accorded with hym that hath hym openly revyled and repaved in disclaundre. This is a ful gristly synne, as Crist seith in the gospel. And taak kepe now, that he that repreve his neighebor, outhere he repreve hym by som harm of peyne that he hath on his body, as Mesel, Croked harlot, or by som synne that he dooth. Now if he repreve hym by harm of peyne, thanne turneth the repreve to Jhesu Crist; for peyne is sent by the right wys sonde of God, and by his suffrance, be it meselrie, or maheym, or maladie. And if he repreve hym uncharitably of synne, as, Thou holour, Thou dronkelewe harlot, & so forth; thanne aperteneth that to the rejoysynge of the devel, that evere hath joye that men doon synne. And certes, chidyngemay nat come but out of a vileyns herte. for after the habundance of the herte speketh the mouth ful ofte. And ye shul understonde that looke, by any wey, whan any man shal chastise another, that he be war from chidyng and reprevyng. for trewely, but he be war, he may ful lightly quyken the fir of angre and of wratthe, which that he sholde quenche, and peraventure sleeth hym which that he myghte chastise with benigneite. for as seith Salomon: The amiable tonge is the tree of lyf; that is to seyn, of lyf espirituel, & soothly, a deslaved tonge sleeth the spiritus of hym that repreve, and eek of hym that is repaved. Loo, what seith Seint Augustyn:

tyn: Ther is nothyng so lyk the develes they speke of good intencion, or elles in game and pley, & yet they speke of wikked entente. **N**OW comth biwreying of conseil, thurgh which a man is defamed; certes, unnethes may he restore the damage. **N**OW comth manace, that is an open folye; for he that ofte manaceth, he threteth moore than he may perfourne ful ofte tyme. **N**OW cometh ydel wordes, that is withouten profit of hym that speketh tho wordes, and eek of hym that herketh tho wordes. Or elles ydel wordes been tho that been nedelees, or withouten entente of natureel profit. And albeit that ydel wordes been som tyme venial synne, yet sholde men douten hem; for we shul yere rekenynge of hem bifore God.

AFTERWARD speke we of scornynge, which is a wikked synne, and namely, whan he scorneth a man for his goode werkes. for certes, swiche scornures faren lyk the foule tode, that may nat endure to smelle the soote savour of the vyne whanne it florissheth. Thise scornures been partyng felawes with the devel; for they han joye whan the devel wynneth, and sorwe whan he leseth. They been adversaries of Jhesu Crist; for they haten that he loveth, that is to seyn, salvacion of soule.

SPEKE we now of wikked conseil; for he that wikked conseil yeveth is a traytour; for he deceyeth hym that trusteth in hym: Ut Achitofel ad Absolonem. But natheles, yet is his wikked conseil first agayn hymself. for, as seith the wise man: Every fals livynge man hath this propertee in hymself, that he that wol anoye another man, he anoyeth first hymself. And men shul understonde, that man shal nat taken his conseil of fals folk, ne of angry folk, or grevous folk, ne of folk that loven specially to muchel hir owene profit, ne to muche worldly folie; namely, in conseilynge of soules.

NOW comth the synne of hem that sowen & maken discord amonges folk, which is a synne that Crist hateth outrely; and no wonder is, for he deyde for to make concord. And moore shame do they to Crist, than dide they that hym crucifiede; for God loveth bettre, that frendshipe be amonges folk, than he dide his owene body, the which that he yaf for unitee. Therefore been they likned to the devel, that evere been aboute to maken discord.

NOW comth the synne of double tonge; swiche as speken faire byform folk, and wikkedly bihymde;

or elles they maken semblant as though they speke of good intencion, or elles in game and pley, & yet they speke of wikked entente.

NOW comth biwreying of conseil, thurgh which a man is defamed; certes, unnethes may he restore the damage.

NOW comth manace, that is an open folye; for he that ofte manaceth, he threteth moore than he may perfourne ful ofte tyme.

NOW cometh ydel wordes, that is withouten profit of hym that speketh tho wordes, and eek of hym that herketh tho wordes. Or elles ydel wordes been tho that been nedelees, or withouten entente of natureel profit. And albeit that ydel wordes been som tyme venial synne, yet sholde men douten hem; for we shul yere rekenynge of hem bifore God.

NOW comth janglyng, that may nat been withoute synne. And as seith Salomon: It is a synne of apert folye. And therfore a philosophreseyde, whan men axed hym how that men sholde plesse the peple; & he answerde: Do manye goode werkes, and speke fewe jangles.

AFTER this comth the synne of japeres, that been the develes apes; for they maken folk to laughe at hire japerie, as folk doon at the gawdes of an ape. Swich japeres deffendeth Seint Paul. Looke how that vertuose wordes and hooly conforten hem that travailen in the service of Crist; right so conforten the vileyns wordes & knakkes of japeris, hem that travailen in the service of the devel. Thise been the synnes that comen of the tonge, that comen of ire, and of othere synnes mo.

Sequitur remedium contra peccatum Ire.

THE remedie agayns ire is a vertu that men clepen mansuetude, that is debonairetee; and eek another vertu, that men callen pacience, or suffrance. Debonairetee withdraweth and refreyneth the stirynges and the moevynges of mannes corage in his herte, in swich manere that they ne shippe nat out by angre ne by ire.

SUFFRANCE suffreth swetely alle the anoyances & the wronges that men doon to man outward. Seint Jerome seith thus of debonairetee: that It dooth noon harm to no wight, ne seith; ne for noon harm that men doon or seyn, he ne eschawfeth nat agayns his resoun. This vertu somtyme comth of nature; for, as seith the philosophre: A man is a quyke thyng, by nature debonaire and trefable to goodnesse. But whan debonairetee is

enformed of grace, thanne is it the moore worth.

PACIENCE, that is another remedie agayns ire, is a vertu that suffreth swetely every mannes goodnesse, and is nat wrooth for noon harm that is doon to hym. The philosophre seith: that Pacience is thilke vertu that suffreth debonairely alle the outrages of adversitee & every wikked word. This vertu maketh a man lyk to God, and maketh hym Goddes owene deere childe, as seith Crist. This vertu disconfiteth thyn enemy. And therefore seith the wise man: If thou wolt venquysse thyn enemy, lerne to suffre. And thou shalt understonde, that man suffreth foure manere of grevances in outward thynges; agayns the whiche foure he moot have foure manere of paciencies.

THE firste grevance is of wikkede wordes; thilke suffred Jhesu Crist withouten gruchyng, ful paciently, whan the Jewes despised and repaved hym ful ofte. Suffre thou therefore paciently; for the wise man seith: If thou stryve with a fool, though the fool be wrooth or though he laughe, algate thou shalt have no reste.

THE oother grevance outward is to have damage of thy catel. Ther agayns suffred Crist ful paciently, whan he was despoiled of al that he hadde in this lyf, and that nas but his clothes.

THE thridde grevance is a man to have harm in his body. That suffred Crist ful paciently in al his passiou.

THE fourthe grevance is in outrageous labour in werkes. Wherefore I seye, that folk that maken hir servants to travailen so grevously, or out of tyme, as on halydayes, soothly they do greet synne. Heer agayns suffred Crist ful paciently, & taughte us pacience, whan he baar upon his blissed shulder the croys, upon which he sholde suffren despitous deeth. Heer may men lerne to be pacient; for certes, noght oonly Cristen men been pacient for love of Jhesu Crist, & for guerdoun of the blisful lyf that is perdurable; but certes, the olde payens, that nevere were Cristene, commended & useden the vertu of pacience.

PHILOSOPHRE upon a tyme, that wolde have beten his disciple for his grete trespass, for which he was greetly amoved, and broghte a yerde to scourge the child; and whan this child saugh the yerde, he seyde to his maister: What thenke ye to do? I wol bete thee, quod the maister, for thy correccioun. Forsothe, quod the child; ye oghten first correcte youreself, that han lost al youre pacience for the gilt of a child. Forsothe, quod the maister, al wepyng, thou seyst

sooth; have thou the yerde, mydeere sone, and correcte me for myn impacience. Of pacience comth obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist, and to alle hem to which he oghte to been obedient in Crist. And understond wel that obedience is perfit, whan that a man dooth gladly and hastily, with good herte entierly, al that he sholde do. Obedience generally, is to perfourme the doctrine of God and of his sovereyns, to which he oghte to ben obeisant in alle rightwisnesse.

Sequitur de Accidia.

AFTER the synnes of envye and of ire, now wol I speken of the synne of accidia. for envye blyndeth the herte of a man, & ire troubleth a man; & accidia maketh hym hevy, thoghtful & wrawful. Envye & ire maken bitternesse in herte; which bitternesse is mooder of accidia, and bynymeth hym the love of alle goodnesse. Channe is accidia the angwyssh of a trouble herte; and Seint Augustyn seith: It is anoy of goodnesse and joye of harm. Certes, this is a dampnable synne; for it dooth wrong to Jhesu Crist, inasmuche as it bynymeth the service that men oghte doon to Crist with alle diligence, as seith Salomon. But accidia dooth no swich diligence; he dooth alle thyng with anoy, and with wrawnesse, slaknesse, and excusacioun, and with ydelnesse, & unlust; for which the book seith: Hecursed be he that dooth the service of God negligently.

CHANNE is accidia enemy to everich estaat of man; for certes, the estaat of man is in thre maneres. Outher it is thestaat of innocence, as was thestaat of Adam bifore that he fell into synne; in which estaat he was holden to wirche as in herynge & adowrynge of God. Another estaat is thestaat of synful men, in which estaat men been holden to labour in preyenge to God for amendement of hire synnes, and that he wole graunte hem to aysen out of hir synnes. Another estaat is thestaat of grace, in which estaat he is holden to werkes of penitence; & certes, to alle thise thynges is accidia enemy & contrarie. for he loveth no bisynesse at al. Now certes, this foule synne, accidia, is cek a ful greet enemy to the lifode of the body; for it ne hath no purveaunce agayn temporeel necessitee; for it forslaweth and forsluggeth, and destroyeth alle goodes temporeles by recchelesnesse.

THE fourthe thyng is, that accidia is lyk to hem that been in the peyne of helle, bycause of hir slouth and of hire hevynesse; for they that been dampned been so bounde, that they ne may

neither wel do ne wel thynke. Of accidia comth first, that a man is anoyed and combred for to doon any goodnesse, and maketh that God hath abhominacion of swich accidia, as seith Seint John. Now hardnesse ne no penaunce. for soothly, Salomon, that he wol nat suffrenoon hardnesse ne penaunce, & therefore he shendeth synne of accidia and slouth sholde exercise himself to doon goode werkes, & manly and vertuously cacchen courage wel to doon; thynkyng that oure Lord Jhesu Crist quiteth every good dede, be it never so lite. Usage of labour is a greet thyng; for it maketh, as seith Seint Bernard, the labourer to have stronge armes and harde synnes; and slouth maketh hem feble and tendre. Channe comth drede to bigynne to werke any goode werkes; for certes, he that is enclined to synne, hym thynketh it is so greet an emprise for to undertake to doon werkes of goodnesse, and casteth in his herte that the circumstaunces of goodnesse been so grevous and so chargeant for to suffre, that he dar nat undertake to do werkes of goodnesse, as seith Seint Gregorie.

DOO comth wanhope, that is despayr of the mercy of God, that comth somtyme of to muche outrageous sorwe, and somtyme of to muche drede; ymaginyng that he hath doon so muche synne, that it wol nat availlen hym, though he wolde repenten hym and forsake synne; thurgh which despayr or drede he abaundonethal his herte to every maner synne, as seith Seint Augustin. Which dampnable synne, if that it continue unto his ende, it is cleped synnyng in the hooly Gost. This horrible synne is so perilous, that he that is despayred, ther nys no felonye ne no synne that he douteth for to do; as shewed wel by Judas. Certes, above alle synnes thanne is this synne moost displeasnt to Crist and moost adversarie. Soothly, he that despayreth hym is lyke the coward champion recreant, that seith Creaunt, withoute nede. Alas! alas! nedeles is he recreant, and nedeles despayred. Certes, the mercy of God is ever redy to every penitent, and is above alle his werkes. Alas! kan a man nat bi thynke hym on the gospel of Seint Luc, xvi, whereas Crist seith: that As wel shal ther be joye in hevne upon a synful man that dooth penitence, as upon nynty and nyne rightful men that never ne dede synne, ne nedes no penitence? Looke forther, in the same gospel, the joye and the feeste of the good man that hadde lost his sone, whan his sone with repentaunce was retourned to

his fader. Kan they nat remembren hem self, that, as seith Seint Luc xxiii, capitulo, how that the theef that was hanged bi syde Jhesu Crist seyde: Lord, remembre of me, whan thou comest into thy regne. of me, whan thou comest into thy regne, forsothe, seyde Crist: I seye to thee, to day shaltow been with me in paradys. Certes, ther is noon so horrible synne of man, that it ne may, in his lyf, be destroyed by penitence, thurgh vertu of the passion & of the deeth of Crist. Alas! what nedeth man thanne to been despayred, sith that his mercy so redy is and large? Axe and have. Channe comth sompnolence, that is, sloggy slombryng, which maketh a man be hevy and dul, in body and in soule. And this synne comth of slouth. And certes, the tyme that, by wey of resoun, men sholde nat slepe, that is by the morwe; but if ther were cause resonable, for soothly, the morwe tyde is moost covenable a man to seye his preyeres, and for to thynken on God, and for to honour God, and to yeven almesse to the povre, that first cometh in the name of Crist. Lo! what seith Salomon: Whoso wolde by the morwe awaken & seke me, he shal fynde. Channe cometh negligenc, or recchelesnesse, that refketh of nothyng. And how that ignoraunce be mooder of alle harm, certes, negligenc is the norice. Negligenc nedooth no fors, whan he shal doon a thyng, whether he do it wel or baddely. Of the remedie of thise two synnes, as seith the wise man: that he that dredeth God, he spareth nat to doon that him oghte doon. And he that loveth God he wol doon diligence to plesse God by his werkes, and abaundone hymself, with al his myght, wel for to doon. Channe comth ydelnesse, that is the yate of alle harmes. An ydel man is lyk to a place that hath no walles; the develes may entre on every syde and sheten at hym at discreit, by temptacion on every syde. This ydelnesse is the thurrok of alle wikked and vilcyns thoghtes, & of alle jangles, truffles, and of alle ordure. Certes, the hevne is yeven to hem that wol labouren, and nat to ydel folk. Eek David seith: that They ne been nat in the labour of men, ne they shul nat been whipped with men, that is to seyn, in purgatorie. Certes, thanne semeth it, they shul be tormented with the devel in helle, but if they doon penitence.

CHANNE comth the synne that men clepen Carditas, as whan a man is to laterede or taryng, or he wole turne to God; and certes, that is a greet folie. He is lyk to hym that falleth in the dych, and wol nat arise. And this vice comth of a fals hope, that he thynketh that he shal lyve longe; but that hope faileth ful ofte.

CHANNE comth lachesse; that is he that whan he biginneth any good werk, anon he shal forleten it, and stynten; as doon they that han any wight to governe, and ne taken of hym namore kepe, anon as they fynden any contrarie or anyanoy. Thise been the newes shepherdes, that leten hir sheep wityngly go renne to the wolf that is in the breres, or do no fors of hir owene governaunce. Of this comth povert & destruccioun, bothe of spirituel and temporel thynges. Channe comth a manere cooldnesse, that fresethal the herte of a man. Channe comth undevocioun, thurgh which a man is so blent, as seith Seint Bernard, and hath swich langour in soule, that he may neither rede ne singe in hooly chirche, ne heere ne thynke of no devocioun, ne travaille with his handes in no good werk, that it nys hym unsavory and al apalled. Channe wexeth he slough and slombry, and soone wol be wrooth, and soone is enclined to hate and to envye. Channe comth the synne of worldly sorwe, which as is cleped Tristicia, that sleeth man, as Seint Paul seith. for certes, swich sorwe werketh to the deeth of the soule and of the body also; for therof comth, that a man is anoyed of his owene lif. Wherefore swich sorwe shorteth ful ofte the lif of a man, er that his tyme be come by wey of kynde.

Remedium contra peccatum Accidia.

AGYNS this horrible synne of accidia, and the branches of the same, ther is a vertu that is called fortitudo, or strengthe; that is, an affectioun thurgh which a man despiseth anyouse thynges. This vertu is so myghty and so vigorous, that it dar withstonde myghtily, & wisely kepen hymself fro perils that been wikked, & wrastle agayn the assautes of the devel, for it enhaunceth & enforceth the soule, right as accidia abateth it, and maketh it feble. for this fortitudo may endure by long suffraunce the travailles that been covenable. This vertu hath manye speces; and the firste is cleped magnanimitie, that is to seyn, greet courage. for certes, ther bihoveth greet courage agayns accidia, lest that it ne swolve the soule by the synne of sorwe, or destroye it by wanhope. This vertu maketh folk to undertake harde thynges and grevous thynges, by hir owene wil, wisely & resonably. And for as muchel as the devel fighteth agayns a man moore by queyntise and by sleight than by strengthe, therefore men shal withatonden hym by wit & by resoun and by discrecioun. Channe am ther the vertues of feith and hope in God, and in his seintes, to acheve and ac-

complice the goode werkes in the whiche he purposeth firmly to continue. Thanne comth seuretee, or sikernes; and that is, whan a man nedouteth no travaille in tyme comyng of the goode werkes that a man hath bigonne. Thanne comth magnificence, that is to seyn, whan a man dooth and perfourneth grete werkes of goodnesse that he hath bigonne; and that is the ende why that men sholde do goode werkes; for in the accomplissynge of grete goode werkes lith the grete guerdoun. Thanne is ther constaunce, that is stablesse of corage; and this sholde been in herte by stedfast feith, and in mouth, and in beryng, and in chiere, and in dede. Eke ther been mo special remedies agains accidie, in diverse werkes, & in consideracioun of the peynes of helle, and of the joyes of hevenc, and in trust of the grace of the Holy Goost, that wole yewe hym myght to perfourne his goode entente.

Sequitur de Avaricia.

AFTER accidie wol I speke of avarice and of covetise, of which synne seith Seint Paule: that The roote of alle harmes is covetise: Ad Thimotheum, sexto capitulo. for soothly, whan the herte of a man is confounded in itself, and troubled, and that the soule hath lost the confort of God, thanne seketh he an ydel solas of worldly thynges.

AVARICE, after the descripcioun of Seint Augustyn, is likerousnesse in herte to have erthely thynges. Som oother folk seyn, that avarice is, for to purchacen manye erthely thynges, and no thyng yewe to hem that han nede. And understood, that avarice ne stant nat oonly in lond ne catel, but somtyme in science & in glorie, & in every manere of outrageous thyng is avarice and covetise. And the difference bitwix avarice and covetise is this. Covetise is for to coveite swiche thynges as thou hast nat; and avarice is for to witholde & kepe swiche thynges as thou hast, withoute rightful nede. Soothly, this avarice is a synne that is ful dampnable; for al hooly writ curseth it, & speketh agayns that vice; for it dooth wrong to Jhesu Crist. for it bireveth hym the love that men to hym owen, and turneth it bakward agayns alle resoun; and maketh that the avaricious man hath moore hope in his catel than in Jhesu Crist, and dooth moore observance in kepynge of his tresor than he dooth to service of Jhesu Crist. And therefore seith Seint Paul, ad Ephesios quinto, that An avaricious man is in the thraldom of ydolatrie. What difference is betwix an ydolastre and an avaricious

man, but that an ydolastre, peraventure, ne hath but o mawmet or two, and the avaricious man hath manye? for certes, every floryn in his cofre is his mawmet. And certyng that God deffended in the firste maundments, as bereth witness God, capitulo xx: Thou shalt have no false goddes bifore me, ne thou shalt make thee no grave thyng. Thus is an avaricious man, that loveth his tresor bifore God, an ydolastre, thurgh this cursed synne of avarice.

Of covetise comen thise harde lordshipes, thurgh whiche men been distreyned by taylages, custumes, and cariages, moore than hire duete or resoun is. And eke they taken of hire bondemen amerciments, whiche myghten moore resonably ben cleped extorcions than amerciments. Of whiche amerciments and raunsonynge of bondemen, somme lordes stywardes seyn, that it is rightful; forasmuche as a cherl hath no temporel thyng that it ne is his lordes, as they seyn. But certes, thise lordshipes doon wrong, that bireven hire bondefolk thynges that they nevere yawe hem. Augustinus de Civitate Dei, libro nono. Sooth is, that the condicioun of thraldom, and the firste cause of thraldom is for synne. Genesis nono. Thus may ye seen that the gilt disserveth thraldom, but nat nature. Wherefore thise lordes ne sholde nat muche glorifyen hem in hir lordshipes, sith that by natureel condicioun they been nat lordes of thralles; but that thraldom comth first by the desert of synne. And fortherover, the lawe seith, that temporel goodes of bondefolk been the goodes of hir lordshipes, ye, that is for to understonde, the goodes of the emperour, to deffenden hem in hir right, but nat for to robben hem ne reven hem. And therefore seith Seneca: Thy prudence sholde lyve benignely with thy thralles. Thilke that thou clepest thy thralles been Goddes peple; for humble folk been Cristes freendes; they been contubernyal with the Lord. Thynk eke, that of swich seed as cherles spryngeth, of swich seed sprynge lordes. As wel may the cherl be saved as the lord. The same deeth that taketh the cherl, swich deeth taketh the lord. Wherefore I rede, do right so with thy cherl, as thou woldest that thy lord dide with thee, if thou were in his plit. Every synful man is a cherl to synne. I rede thee, certes, that thou, lord, werke in swiche wise with thy cherles, that they rather love thee than drede. I woot wel ther is degree above degree, as reson is; and skile it is, that men do hir devoir theras it is due; but certes, extorcions & despit of youre underlynges is dampnable.

AND fortherover understood well that thise conquerours, or tiraunts, maken ful of the thralles of hem that been born of as roial blood as been they that hem conqueren. This name of thraldom was nevere erst knowth, til that Noe seyde, that his sone Canaan sholde be thral to his bretheren for his synne. What seyde we thanne of hem that pilen & doon extorcions to hooly chirche? Certes, the swerd, that men yeven first to a knyght whan he is newe dubbed, signifieth that he sholde deffenden hooly chirche, and nat robben it ne pilen it; and whoso dooth, is traitour to Crist. And, as seith Seint Augustyn: They been the develes wolves, that stranglen the sheep of Jhesu Crist; and doon worse than wolves. for soothly, whan the wolf hath ful his wombe, he stynteth to strangle the sheep. But soothly, the pilours and destroyours of Goddes hooly chirche ne do nat so; for they ne stynte nevere to pile.

OW, as I have seyde, sith so is that synne was first cause of thraldom, thanne is it thus; that thilke tyme that at this world was in synne, thanne was al this world in thraldom and subjeccioun. But certes, sith the tyme of grace cam, God ordeyned that som folk sholde be moore heigh in estat and in degree, and som folk moore lough, and that everich sholde be served in his estat and in his degree. And therefore, in somme contrees ther they byen thralles, whan they han turned hem to the feith, they maken hire thralles free out of thraldom. And therefore, certes, the lord oweth to his man that the man oweth to his lord. The pope calleth hymself servaunt of the servaunts of God; but forasmuche as the estat of hooly chirche ne myghte nat han be, ne the commune profit myghte nat han be kept, ne pees and reste in erthe, but if God hadde ordeyned that som men hadde hyer degree & som men lower: therfore was sovereyntee ordeyned to kepe and mayntene and deffenden hire underlynges or hire subgetts in resoun, as ferforth as it lith in hire power; & nat to destroyen hem ne confounde.

WHEREFORE I seye, that thilke lordes that been lyk wolves, that devouren the possessiouns or the catel of poure folk wrongfully, withouten mercy or mesure, they shul receyven, by the same mesure that they han mesured to poure folk, the mercy of Jhesu Crist, but if it be amended. Now comth deceite bitwix marchaunt and marchaunt. And thou shalt understonde, that marchandise is in two maneres; that oon is bodily, & that oother is goostly. That oon is honeste & leveful, and that oother is dishoneste & unleveful. Of thilke bodily marchandise, that is leveful and honeste,

is this; that, thecas God hath ordeyned that a regne or a contree is suffisaunt to hymself, thanne is it honeste and leveful, that of habundaunce of this contree, that men helpe another contree that is moore nedy. And therefore, ther moote been marchants to bryngen fro that o contree to that oother hire marchandises.

THAT oother marchandise, that men haunten with fraude and trecherie & deceite, with lesynges & false othes, is cursed and dampnable. Espirituel marchandise is proprely symonye, that is, ententif desir to byen thyng espirituel, that is, thyng that aperteneth to the seintuarie of God & to cure of the soule. This desir, if so be that a man do his diligence to parfournen it, albeit that his desir ne take noon effect, yet is it to hym a deedly synne; and if he beordred, he is irreguler. Certes, symonye is cleped of Simon Magus, that wolde han boght, for temporel catel, the yifte that God hadde yeven, by the hooly Goost, to Seint Peter and to the Apostles. And therefore understood, that bothe he that selleth and he that beyeth thynges espirituels, been cleped Symonials; be it by catel, be it by procurynge, or by fleschly preyere of his freendes, fleschly freendes, or espirituel freendes, fleschly in two maneres; as by kynrede, or othere freendes. Soothly, if they praye for hym that is nat worthy and able, it is symonye, if he take the benefice; and if he be worthy and able, ther nys noon.

THAT oother manere is, whan a man or womman preyen for folk to avauncen hem, oonly for wikked fleschly affectioun that they have unto the persone; and that is foul symonye. But certes, in service, for which men yeven thynges espirituels unto hir servants, it moot been understonde that the service moot been honeste, and elles nat; and eke that it be withouten bargaynyng, and that the persone be able. for, as seith Seint Damascie: Alle the synnes of the world, at regard of this synne, arn as thyng of noght; for it is the gretteste synne that may be, after the synne of Lucifer and Antecrist. for by this synne, God forleseth the chirche, and the soule that he boghte with his precious blood, by hem that yeven chirches to hem that been nat digne. for they putten in theves, that stelen the soules of Jhesu Crist and destroyen his patrimoyne. By swiche undigne preestes and curates han lewed men the lasse reverence of the sacraments of hooly chirche; & swiche yeveres of chirches putten out the children of Crist, & putten into the chirche the develes owene sone. They sellen the soules that lambes sholde kepen, to the wolf that strangleth hem. And therefore shul they nevere han

part of the pasture of lambes, that is, the blisse of hevene.

NOW comth hasardrie, with his apurtenances, as tables and rafles; of which comth deceite, false othes, chidynges, & alle ravynes, blasphemynge and reneyinge of God, and hate of his neighebores, wast of goodes, mysspendynge of tyme, and somtyme manslaughtre. Certes, hasardours ne mowe nat been withouten greet synne whiles thei haunte that crafte. Of avarice comen eek lesynges, thefte, fals witnessse, and false othes. And ye shul understonde that thise been grete synnes, and expres agayn the comaundments of God, as I have seyd. fals witnessse is in word and eek in dede. In word, as for to bireve thy neighebores goode name by thy fals witnessyng, or bireve hym his catel or his heritage by thy fals witnessyng; whan thou, for ire or for meede, or for envye, berest fals witnessse, or accusest hym, or excusest hym, by thy fals witnessse, or elles excusest thyself falsly. Ware yow, questmongeres and notaries! Certes, for fals witnessyng was Susanna in ful gret sorwe and payne, and many another mo. The synne of thefte is eek expres agayns Goddes heeste, and in two maneres, corporeel and espirituel. Corporeel, as for to take thy neighebores catel agayn his wyl, be it by force or by sleighte, be it by met or by mesure. By stelyng eek of fals endite-ments upon hym, and in borwyng of thy neighebores catel, in entente never to payen it agayn, and semblable thynges.

ESPITUAEL thefte is sacrilege, that is to seyn, hurtyng of hooly thynges, or of thynges sacred to Crist, in two maneres; by reson of the hooly place, as chirches or chirche/hawes, for which every vileyns synne that men doon in swiche places may be cleped sacrilege, or every violence in the semblable places. Also, they that withdrawn falsly the rightes that longen to hooly chirche. And pleyntly and generally, sacrilege is to reven hooly thyng fro hooly place, or unhooly thyng out of hooly place.

Relevacio contra peccatum Avaricie.

NOW shul ye understonde, that the releevynge of avarice is misericorde, & pitee largely taken. And men myghten axe, why that misericorde & pitee is releevynge of avarice. Certes, the avaricious man sheweth no pitee ne misericorde to the nedeful man; for he deliteth hym in the keepynge of his tresor, and nat in the rescowynge ne releevynge of his evene cristene. And therefore speke I first of misericorde.

THANNE is misericorde, as seith the philosophre, a vertu, by which the corage of man is stired by the myserie of hym that is mysessed. Upon which misericorde folweth pitee, in parfournynge of charitable werkes of misericorde. And certes, thise thynges moeven a man to misericorde of Jhesu Crist, that he yaf hymself for oure gilt, and suffred deeth for misericorde, and forgaf us oure originale synnes; and therby releessed us fro the peynes of helle, and amenused the peynes of purgatorie by penitence, and yeveth grace wel to do, and attelaste the blisse of hevene. The spes of misericorde been, as for to lene, and for to yeve, and to foreyven & releese, and for to han pitee in herte, and compassion of the meschief of his evene cristene, and eek to chastise there as nedes is.

ANOTHER manere of remedie agayns avarice is resonable largesse; but soothly, heere bihoveth the consideracioun of the grace of Jhesu Crist, & of his temporel goodes, and eek of the goodes perdurables that Crist yaf to us; and to han remembrance of the deeth that he shal receyve, he noot whanne, where, ne how; and eek that he shal forgoon at that he hath, save oonly that he hath despended in good werkes. But, forasmuche as som folk been unmesurable, men oughten eschue fool largesse, that men clepen wast. Certes, he that is fool large ne yeveth nat his catel, but he leseth his catel. Soothly, what thyng that he yeveth for veyn glorie, as to mynstrals & to folk, for to bereyn his renoun in the world, he hath synne therof, and noon almesse. Certes, he leseth foule his good, that ne seketh with the yifte of his good nothyng but synne. He is lyk to a hors that seketh rather to drynken drowy or trouble water, than for to drynken water of the clere welle. And forasmuche as they yeven theras they sholde nat yeven, to hem aperteneth thilk malisoun that Crist shal yeven at the day of doome to hem that shullen been dampned.

Sequitur de Gula.

AFTER avarice comth glotonye, which is expres eek agayn the comandement of God. Glotonye is unmesurable appetit to ete or to drynke, or elles to doon ynogh to the unmesurable appetit & disorderneyne covetise to eten or to drynke. This synne corrupted al this world, as is wel shewed in the synne of Adam and of Eve. Looke eek, what seith Seint Paul of glotonye; Many seith Seint Paul, goon, of whiche I have ofte seyd to yow, & now I seye it wepyng, that they been the enemys of the croys of Crist; of whiche the ende is deeth, and of

whiche hire wombe is hire God, and hire glorie in confusioun of hem that so devouren crthely thynges. He that is usant to this synne of glotonye, he ne may no synne withstonde. He moot been in servage of alle vices, for it is the develes hoord ther he hideth hym and resteth.

THIS synne hath manye spes. The firste is dronkenesse, that is the horrible sepulture of mannes resoun; & therfore, whan a man is dronken, he hath lost his resoun; and this is deedly synne. But soothly, whan that a man is nat wont to strong drynke, & peraventure ne knoweth nat the strengthe of the drynke, or hath feblesse in his heed, or hath travailed, thurgh which he drynketh the moore, al be he soodeynly caught with drynke, it is no deedly synne, but venyal. The seconde spece of glotonye is, that the spirit of a man wexeth al trouble; for dronkenesse bireveth hym the discrecioun of his wit. The thridde spece of glotonye is, whan a man devourereth his mete, and hath no rightful manere of etynge. The fourthe is whan, thurgh the grete habundaunce of his mete, the humours in his body been deestempred. The fift is, foryetelnesse by to muchel drynkyng; for which somtyme a man foryeteth er the morwe what he dide at even, or on the nyght biforn.

ANOTHER manere been distinct the spes of glotonye, after Seint Gregorie. The firste is, for to ete biforn tyme to ete. The seconde is, whan a man get hym to delicat mete or drynke. The thridde is, whan men taken to muche over mesure. The fourthe is, curiositee, with greet entente to maken and apparailen his mete. The fift is, for to eten to greedily. Thise been the fyve fynghes of the develes hand, by whiche he draweth folk to synne.

Remedium contra peccatum Gule.

AYNS glotonye is the remedie abstinence, as seith Galien; but that holde I nat meritorie, if he do it oonly for the heele of his body. Seint Augustyn wole, that abstinence be doon for vertu and with patience. Abstinence, he seith, is litel worth, but if a man have good wil thereto, and but it be enforced by patience and by charitee, and that men doon it for Godes sake, and in hope to have the blisse of hevene. The felawes of abstinence been attemperance, that holdeth the meene in alle thynges; eek shame, that eschueth alle dishonestee; suffisance, that seketh no riche metes ne drynkes, ne dooth no fors of too outrageous apparailynge of mete. Mesure also, that restreyneth by resoun the deslaved appetit of etynge; sobrenesse also, that

restreyneth the outrage of drynke; sparynge also, that restreyneth the delicat ese to sitte longe at his mete and softely; wherfore som folk stonden, of hir owene wyl, to eten at the lasse leyser.

Sequitur de Luxuria.

AFTER glotonye, thanne comth lecherie; for thise two synnes been so ny cosyns, that ofte tyme they wol nat departe. God woot, this synne is ful displeaunt thyng to God; for he seyde himself: Do no lecherie. And therfore he putte grete peynes agayns this synne in the olde lawe. If womman thral were taken in this synne, she sholde be beten with staves to the deeth. And if she were a gentil womman, she sholde be slayn with stones. And if she were a bisschopes doghter, she sholde been brent, by Goddes comandement. Fortherover, by the synne of lecherie, God dreynthe al the world at the diluge. And after that, he brente five citees with thonder/leyt, and sank hem into helle.

NOW lat us speke thanne of thilke stynkyng synne of lecherie that men clepe avowtrie of wedded folk; that is to seyn, if that oon of hem be wedded, or elles bothe. Seint John seith, that avowtiers shullen been in helle in a stank brennyng of fyr and of brymston; in fyr, for the lecherie; in brymston, for the stynk of hire ordure. Certes, the brekyng of this sacrament is an horrible thyng; it was makid of God hymself in paradys, and conformed by Jhesu Crist, as witnesseth Seint Mathew in the gospel: A man shal lete fader and mooder, and taken hym to his wif, and they shullen be two in o flesh. This sacrament bitokneth the knyttyng together of Crist and of hooly chirche. And nat oonly that God forbade avowtrie in dede, but eek he comanded that thou sholdest nat covete thy neighebores wif. In this heeste, seith Seint Augustyn, is forboden alle manere covetise to doon lecherie. I.e., what seith Seint Mathew in the gospel: that Whoso seeth a womman to covetise of his lust, he hath doon lecherie with hire in his herte. Heere may ye seen that nat oonly the dede of this synne is forboden, but eek the desir to doon that synne.

THIS cursed synne anoyeth grevousliche hem that it haunten. And first, to hire soule; for he obligeth it to synne and to peyne of deeth that is perdurable. Unto the body anoyeth it grevously also, for it dreyeth hym, and wasteth, and shenteth hym, and of his blood he maketh sacrifice to the feend of helle; it wasteth his catel and his substaunce. And certes, if it be a foul thyng, a man to waste his

catel on wommen, yet is it a fouler thyng, whan that, for swich ordure, wommen dispenden upon men hir catel and substaunce. This synne, as seith the prophete, bireveth man and womman hir goode fame, and al hir honour; and it is ful plesant to the devel; for therby wynneth he the mooste partie of this world. And, right as a marchant deliteth hym moost in chaffare that he hath moost advantage of, right so deliteth the fend in this ordure.

THIS is that oother hand of the devel, with five fynghes, to cacche the peple to his vileynye. The firste fyngher is the fool lookynge of the fool womman, and of the fool man, that sleeth right as the basilicok sleeth folk by the venym of his sighte; for the covetise of eyen folweth the covetise of the herte. The seconde fyngher is the vileyns touchynge in wikkede manere; and therefore, seith Salomon: that whoso toucheth and handleth a womman, he fareth lyk hym that handleth the scorpioun that styngeth and sodeynly sleeth thurgh his envynmyng; as whoso toucheth warm pych, it shent his fynghes. The thridde, is foule wordes, that fareth lyk fyr, that right anon brenneth the herte. The fourthe fyngher is the kysynge; and trewely he were a greet fool that wolde kisse the mouth of a brennyng oven, or of a fourneys. And moore fooler been they that kissen in vileynye; for that mouth is the mouth of helle: & namely thise olde doctardes holours, yet wol they kisse though they may nat do, and smatre hem. Certes, they been lyk to houndes; for an hound whan he comth by the roser, or by othere beautees, though he may nat pisse, yet wole he heve up his leg and make a contenance to pisse. And for that many man weneth that he may nat synne, for no likerousnesse that he dooth with his wyf; certes, that opinioun is fals. God woot, a man may sleen hymself with his owene knyf, and make hymself drunken of his owene tonne. Certes, be it wyf, be it child, or any worldly thyng that he loveth biforn God, it is his mawmet, and he is an ydolastre. Man sholde loven his wyf by discrecioun, patiently & atemprely; and thanne is she as though it were his suster. The fifthe fyngher of the develes hand is the styngynge dede of lecherie. Certes, the five fynghes of glotonie the fend put in the wombe of a man, & with his five fynghes of lecherie he gripeth hym by the reynes, for to throwen hym into the fourneys of helle; theras they shul han the fyr and the wormes that ever shul lasten, & wepyng and wailynge, sharp hunger & thurst, and grymnesse of develes that shullen al to trede hem, withouten respit and withouten ende.

Of lecherie, as I seyde, souden diverse speces; as fornicacioun that is bitwixe man and womman that been nat maried; and this is deedly synne and agayns nature. Al that is enemy and destruccioun to nature is agayns nature. Parfay, the resoun of a man telleth eek hym wel that it is deedly synne, forasmuche as God forbad lecherie. And Seint Paul yeveth hem the regne, that nys dewe to no wight but to hem that doon deedly synne. Another synne of lecherie is to bireve a mayden of hir maydenhede; for he that so dooth, certes, he casteth a mayden out of the hyste degree that is in this present lif, and bireveth hire thilke precious fruyt that the book clepeth: The hundred fruyt. I ne kan seye it noon oother weyes in English, but in Latyn it highte: Centesimus fructus. Certes, he that so dooth is cause of manye damages and vileynyes, mo than any man kan rekene; right as he somtyme is cause of alle damages that beestes don in the feeld, that breketh the hegge or the closure; thurgh which he destroyeth that may nat been restored, for certes, namoore may maydenhede be restored than an arm that is smyten fro the body may retourne agayn to were. She may have mercy; this woot I wel, if she do penitence; but nevere shal it be that she nas corrupt.

AND, albeit so that I have spoken somewhat of avowtrie, it is good to shewen mo perils that longen to avowtrie, for to eschue that foule synne. Avowtrie in Latyn is for to seyn, approachynge of oother mannes bed, thurgh which tho that whilom weren o flesch abawndone hir bodyes to othere persones. Of this synne, as seith the wise man, folwen manye harmes. first, brekyng of feith; & certes, in feith is the keye of Cristendom. And whan that feith is broken and lorn, soothly, Cristendom stant weyn & withouten fruyt. This synne is eek a thefte; for thefte generally is for to reve a wight his thyng agayns his wille. Certes, this is the fouleste thefte that may be, whan a womman steleth hir body from hir housbonde, and yeveth it to hire holour to defoulen hire; & steleth hir soule fro Crist, & yeveth it to the devel. This is a fouler thefte, than for to breke a chirche and stele the chalice; for thise avowtries breken the temple of God spiritually, and stelen the vessel of grace, that is, the body and the soule, for which Crist shal destroyen hem, as seith Seint Paul.

SOOTHLY of this thefte douted gretly Joseph, whan that his lordes wyf preyed hym of vileynye, whan he seyde: Lo, my lady, how my lord hath take to me under my warde al that he hath

in this world; ne no thyng of his thynges is out of my power, but oonly ye, that been his wyf. And how sholde I thanne do this wikkednesse, & synne so horribly agayns God, & agayns my lord? God it forbode! Alas! al to litel is swich trouthe now yfounde.

THE thridde harm is the filthe thurgh which they breken the comandement of God, and defoulen the auctour of matrimoyne, that is, Crist. For certes, in somuche as the sacrament of mariage is so noble and so digne, so muche is it gretter synne for to breken it; for God made mariage in paradys, in the estaat of innocence, to multiplye mankynde to the service of God. And therefore is the brekyng therof the moore grevous. Of which brekyng comen false heires of tyme, that wrongfully occupien folkes heritages. And therefore wol Crist putte hem out of the regne of hevene, that is heritage to goode folk. Of this brekyng comth eek ofte tyme, that folk unwar wedden or synnen with hire owene kynrede; and namely thilke harlottes that haunten bordels of thise fool wommen, that mowe be likned to a comune gonge, wher as men purgen hire ordure.

WHAT seye we eek of putours, that lyven by the horrible synne of putrie, and constreyne wommen to yelden to hem a certeyn rente of hire bodily putrie; ye, somtyme of his owene wyf or his child; as doon thise bawdes? Certes, thise been cursede synnes. Understood eek, that avowtrie is set gladly in the ten comandements bitwixe thefte and manslaughtre; for it is the gretteste thefte that may be; for it is thefte of body and of soule. And it is lyk to homycide; for it herveth atwo and breketh atwo hem that first were makid o flesch, and therefore, by the olde lawe of God, they sholde be slayn. But natheles, by the lawe of Jhesu Crist, that is lawe of pitee, whan he seyde to the womman that was founden in avowtrie, & sholde han been slayn with stones, after the wyl of the Jewes, as was hir lawe: Go, quod Jhesu Crist, and have namoore wyl to synne. For, wille namoore to do synne. Soothly, the vengeaunce of avowtrie is awarded to the peynes of helle, but if so be that it be destourbed by penitence.

ET been ther mo speces of this cursid synne; as whan that oon of hem is religious, or elles bothe; or of folk that been entred into ordre, as subdekne or dekne, or preest, or hospitaliers. And evere the hyer that he is in ordre, the gretter is the synne. The thynges that gretly aggregen hire synne, is the brekyng of hire avow of chastitee, whan they receyved the ordre. And fortherover, sooth is, that hooley ordre is chief of al the tre-

sorie of God, and his especial signe and mark of chastitee; to shewe that they been joyned to chastitee, which that is moost precious lyf that is. And thise ordred folk been specially tittled to God, and of the special meignee of God; for which, whan they doon deedly synne, they been the special traytours of God and of his peple; for they lyven of the peple, to preye for the peple, and while they been suche traytours here preyers availen nat to the peple.

PREESTES been aungeles, as by the dignitee of hir mystere; but forsothe Seint Paul seith: that Sathanas transformeth hym in an aungel of light. Soothly, the preest that haunth deedly synne, he may be likned to the aungel of derknesse transformed in the aungel of light; he semeth aungel of light, but forsothe he is aungel of derknesse. Swiche preestes been the sones of Helie, as sheweth in the book of Kynges, that they weren the sones of Belial, that is, the devel. Belial is to seyn Withouten juge; and so faren they; hem thynketh they been free, and han no juge, namoore than hath a free bole that taketh which cow that hym liketh in the toun. So faren they by wommen. For right as a free bole is ynough for al a toun, right so is a wikked preest corruption ynough for al a parisshe, or for al a contree.

THISE preestes, as seith the book, ne konnen nat the mystere of preesthode to the peple, ne God ne knowe they nat; they ne helde hem nat apayd, as seith the book, of soden flesch that was to hem offred, but they tooke by force the flesch that is rawe. Certes, so thise shrewes ne holden hem nat apayed of roasted flesch and sode flesch, with which the peple fedden hem in greet reverence, but they wole have raw flesch of folkes wyves and hir doghtres. And certes, thise wommen that consenten to hire harlotrie, doon greet wrong to Crist and to hooley chirche & alle halwes, and to alle soules; for they bireven alle thise, hym that sholde worshipecrist and hooley chirche, and preye for cristene soules. And therefore han swiche preestes, and hire lemmanes eek that consenten to hir lecherie, the malisoun of al the court cristen, til they come to amendement.

THE thridde spece of avowtrie is somtyme bitwixe a man & his wyf; and that is whan they take no reward in hire assemblynge, but oonly to hire fleschly delit, as seith Seint Jerome; and ne rekken of nothyng but that they been assembled; bycause that they been maried, al is good ynough, as thynketh to hem. But in swich folk hath the devel power, as seyde the aungel Raphael to Thobie; for in hire assemblynge they putten Jhesu Crist out

of hire herte, and yeven himself to alle ordure. The fourthe spece is, the assemble of hem that been of hire kynrede, or of hem that been of oon affynyte, or elles with hem with whiche hir fadres or hir kynrede han deled in the synne of lecherie. This synne maketh hem lyk to houndes, that taken no hepe to kynrede. And certes, parentele is in two maneres, outher goostly or fleschly: goostly, as for to deelen with his godsibbes. For right so as he that engendreth a child is his fleschly fader, right so is his godfader his fader espirituel. for which a womman may in no lasse synne assemble with hire godsib than with hire owene fleschly brother.

THE fiftthe spece is thilke abhominable synne, of which that no man unnetheoghte speke ne write, natheless it is openly rehersed in holy writ. This cursednesse doon men & wommen in diverse entente, and in diverse manere; but though that hooly writ speke of horrible synne, certes, hooly writ may nat been defouled, namoore than the sonne that shyneth on the mixen.

ANOTHER synne aperteneth to lechery, that comth in slepyng; & this synne cometh ofte to hem that been maydenes, and eek to hem that been corrupt; & this synne men clepen pollucion, that comth in four maneres. Somtyme, of langwysynge of body; for the humours been to ranke and habundaunt in the body of man. Somtyme, of infermetee; for the flesse of the vertu retentif, as phisik maketh mencion. Somtyme, for surfeit of mete & drynke. And somtyme, of vileyns thoghtes, that been enclosed in mannes mynde whan he gooth to slepe; which may nat been withoute synne. for which men moste kepen hem wisely, or elles may men synnen ful greuously.

Remedium contra peccatum Luxurie.

ALL comth the remedie agayns lecherie, and that is generally, chastitee and continence, that restreyneth alle the disorderne moevynge that comen of fleschly talentes. And evere the gretter merite shal he han, that most restreyneth the wikkede eschawfynge of the ordure of this synne. And this is in two maneres; that is to seyn, chastitee in mariage, & chastitee of widwehode. Now shaltow understonde, that matrimoyne is leefful assemblynge of man & of womman, that receyven, by vertu of the sacrament the boond, thurgh which they may nat be departed in al hir lyf, that is to seyn, whil that they lyven bothe. This, as seith the book, is a ful greet sacrament. God maked it, as I have seyde, in paradys,

and wolde hymself be born in mariage. And, for to halwen mariage, he was at a weddyng, whereas he turned water into wyn; which was the firste miracle that he wrought in erthe biforn his disciples.

THE effect of mariage clemeth fornicacioun & replenysseth hooly chirche of good lynage; for that is synne into venial synne bitwixe hem that been ywedded, and maketh the hertes al oon of hem that been ywedded, as wel as the bodies. This is verray mariage that was established by God er that synne bigam, whan natureel lawe was in his right point in paradys; & it was ordeyned that oon sholde have but o woman, & o woman but o man, as seith Seint Augustyn, by manye resouns.

FIRST, for mariage is figured bitwixe Crist & hooly chirche. And that oother is, for a man is hewed of a womman; algate, by ordinaunce it sholde be so. for if a womman hadde mo men than oon, thanne sholde she have moo hevendes than oon, & that were an horrible thyng biforn God; and eek a womman ne myghte nat plesse to many folk at oones. And also there sholde nevere be pees nereste amonges hem; for everich wolde axen his owne thyng. And fortherover, no man ne sholde knowe his owne engendrure, ne whos sholde have his heritage; and the womman sholde been the lasse biloved, fro the tyme that she were conjoynt to many men.

ALL comth, how that a man sholde bere hym with his wif; and namyche in two thynges, that is to seyn, in suffraunce and reverence, as shewed Crist whan he made first womman, for he made hire nat of the heved of Adam, for she sholde nat clayme to greet lordshipe; for theras the womman hath the maistris, she maketh to muche desray; ther nedden none ensamples of this; the experience of day by day oghte suffise. Also certes, God nemadenat womman of the foot of Adam, for she ne sholde nat been holden to lowe; for she kan nat patiently suffre; but God made womman of the ryb of Adam, for womman sholde be felawe unto man, Man sholde bere hym to his wif in feith, in trouthe, and in love, as seith Seint Paul; that a man sholde loven his wif as Crist loved hooly chirche, that loved it so wel that he deyde for it. So sholde a man for his wif, if it were nede.

ALL how that a womman sholde be subget to hire housbonde, that telleth Seint Peter. first, in obedience. And eek, as seith the decree, a womman that is wif, as longe as she is a wif, she hath noon auctoritee to swere ne bere witnessse withoute leve of hir housbonde, that

is hire lord; algate he sholde be so by reason. She sholde eek serve hym in alle honestee, and been attempre of hire array. I woot wel that they sholde sette hire entente to plesen hir housbondes, but nat by hire queyntise of array. Seint Jerome seith, that wyves that been apparailled in silk & in precious purple ne mowe nat clothen hem in Jhesu Crist. What seith Seint John eek in this matere? Seint Gregorie eek seith that no wight seketh precious array but only for veyne glorie, to been honoured the moore biforn the peple. It is a greet folye, a womman to have a fair array outward and in herself be foul inward. A wyf sholde eek be mesurable in lookyng, and in beryng, and in lawghyng, and discreet in alle hire wordes and hire dedes. And a manye resouns.

ANNE shal men understonde that for thre thynges a man and his wyf fleschly mowen assemble. The firste is in entente of engendrure of children to the service of God, for certes, that is the cause final of matrimoyne. Another cause is, to yelden everich of hem to oother the dette of hire bodies, for neither of hem hath power over his owne body. The thridde is, for to eschewe lecherie and vileynye. The ferste is forsothe deedly synne. As to the firste, it is meritorie; the seconde also; for, as seith the decree, that she hath merite of chastitee that yeldeth to hire housbonde the dette of hir body, ye, though it be agayn hir likyng and the lust of hire herte. The thridde manere is venial synne, & trewely, scarcely may ther any of this be withoute venial synne, for the corrupcioun & for the delit. The fourthe manere is for to understonde, if they assemble oonly for amorous love, and for noon of the foreseyde causes, but for to accomple thilke brennyng delit, they rekke nevere how ofte, soothly it is deedly synne; & yet, with sorwe, somme folk wol peynen hem moore to doon than to hire appetit suffiseth.

THE seconde manere of chaastitee is for to been a clene wydwe, and eschue the embracynges of man, and desiren the embracynges of Jhesu Crist. This been tho that han been wyves & han forgoon hire housbondes, & eek wommen that han doon lecherie & been releved by penitence. And certes, if that a wyf koude kepen hire al chaast by licence of hire housbonde, so that she yve nevere noon occasion that he agilty, it were to hire a greet merite. This manere wommen that observ-

en chaastitee moste beclene in herte, as welle as in body and in thought, and mesurable in clothyng and in contenance; and been abstinent in etyng & drynkyng, in spekyng, and in dede. They been the vessel, or the boyste of the blisse Magdelene, that fulfilleth hooly chirche of good odour.

THE thridde manere of chaastitee is virginitee, and it bihoveth that she be hooly in herte & clene of body; thanne is she spouse to Jhesu Crist, and she is the lyf of anges. She is the preisyng of this world, & she is as thise martirs in egalitee. She hath in hire that tonge may nat telle, ne herte thynke. Virginitee baar oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and virgine was hymself.

ANOTHER remedie agayns lecherie is, specially to withdrawen swiche thynges as yeve occasion to thilke vileynye; as ese, etyng & drynkyng; for certes, whan the pot boyleth strongly, the beste remedie is to withdrawe the fyr. Slepynge longe in greet quiete is eek a greet no- rice to lecherie.

ANOTHER remedie agayns lecherie is, that a man or a womman eschue the compaignye of hem by whiche he douteth to be tempted; for albeit so that the dede is withstonden, yet is ther greet temptacioun. Soothly, a whit wal, although it ne brenne noght fully by stikyng of a candele, yet is the wal blak of the leyt. ful ofte tyme I rede, that no man truste in his owne perfeccioun, but he be stronger than Sampson, and hoolier than David, & wiser than Salomon. Now after that I have declared yow, as I kan, the sevene deedly synnes, & somme of hire braunches and hire remedies, soothly, if I koude, I wolde telle yow the ten comandements. But so heigh a doctrine I lete to divines. Natheless, I hope to God they been touched in this tretise, everich of hem alle.

Sequitur secunda pars Penitencie.

ALL, forasmuche as the seconde partie of penitence stant in confessioun of mouth, as I bigan in the firste chapitre, I seye, Seint Augustyn seith: Synne is every word & every dede, and al that men coveiten agayn the lawe of Jhesu Crist; & this is for to synne in herte, in mouth, and in dede, by thy five wittes, that been sighte, heryng, smell- yng, tastyng or savouryng, & feelyng.

ALL is it good to understonde that that agreggeth muchel every synne. Thow shalt considere what thow art that doost the synne; wheither thou be male or femele, yong or oold, gentil or thral, free or servant, hool or syk, wedded or sen- gle, ordred or unordred, wys or fool, clerk or seculer; if she be of thy kynrede, bodily

or goostly, or noon; if any of thy kynrede have synned with hire or noon, and manye mo thynges. Another circumstaunce is this; whether it be doon in fornicacioun, or in avowtrie, or noon; incest, or noon; mayden, or noon; in manere of homicide, or noon; horrible grete synnes or smale; & how longe thou hast continued in synne. The thridde circumstaunce is the place ther thou hast do synne; whether in oother mennes hous or in thy owene; in feeld or in chirche, or in chireheawe; in chirche dedicaat, or noon. for if the chirche be halwed, and man or womman spille his kynde inwith that place by wey of synne, or by wikked temptacioun, the chirche is entredited til it be reconciled by the bysshop; and the preest that dide swich a vileynye, to terme of al his lif, he sholde namoore synge masse; & if he dide, he sholde doon deedly synne at every time that he so songe masse. The fourthe circumstaunce is, by whiche mediatours or by whiche messagers, as for enticement, or for consentement to bere compaignye with felaweshipe; for many a wrecche, for to bere compaignye, wil go to the devel of helle. Wherfore they that eggen or consenten to the synne been parteners of the synne, & of the dampnacioun of the synner. The fyfthe circumstaunce is, how manye tymes that he hath synned, if it be in his mynde, and how ofte that he hath falle. for he that ofte falleth in synne, he despiseth the mercy of God, and encreaseth his synne, & is unkynde to Crist; and he wexeth the moore fieble to withstande synne, and synneth the moore lightly, and the latter ariseth, and is the moore eschew for to shryven hym, namely, to hym that is his confessour. for which that folk, whan they falle agayn in hir olde folies, outhere they forleten hir olde confessours al outrelly, or elles they departen hir shrift in diverse places; but soothly, swich departed shrift deserveth no mercy of God of his synnes. The sixte circumstaunce is, why that a man synneth, as by temptacioun; & if hymself procure thilke temptacioun, or by the excitynge of oother folke; or if he synne with a womman by force, or by hire owene assent; or if the womman, maugree hir hed, hath been afforced, or noon; this shal she telle; for covetise, or for povertie, and if it was hire procuryng or noon; & swiche manere harneys. The seventh circumstaunce is, in what manere he hath doon his synne, or how that she hath suffred that folk han doon to hire. And the same shal the man telle pleyntly, with alle circumstaunces; and whether he hath synned with comune bordel wommen, or noon; or doon his synne in hooley tymes, or noon; in fastyng, tymes, or noon; or biforn his shrifte, or after his latter shrifte;

and hath, peraventure, broken therefore his penance enjoyned; by whos help and whos conseil; by sorcerie or craft; al mooste toold. Alle these thynges, after that they been grete or smale, engreggen the consciens of man. And eek the preest that is thyngement in yevyng of thy penance, & that is after thy contricioun. for understond wel, that after tyme that a man hath defouled his baptesme by synne, if he wole come to salvacioun, ther is noon other way but by penitence & shrifte and satisfaccioun; and namely by the two, if ther be a confessour to which he may shryven hym; and the thridde, if he have lyf to parfournen it. **T**HANNE shal man looke and considere, that if he wole maken a trewe and a profitable confessioun, ther mooste be foure condiciouns. first, it mooste been in sorweful bitternesse of herte, as seyde the kyng Ezechias to God: I wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lif in bitternesse of myn herte. This condicioun of bitternesse hath fyve signes. The first is, that confessioun mooste be shamefast, nat for to covere ne hyden his synne, for he hath agilt his God & defouled his soule. And therof seith Saint Augustyn: The herte travaileth for shame of his synne; and for he hath greet shamefastnesse, he is digne to have greet mercy of God. Swich was the confessioun of the publican, that wolde nat heven up his eyen to hevene, for he hadde offended God of hevene, for which shamefastnesse he hadde anon the mercy of God. And therof seith Saint Augustyn, that swich shamefast folk been next foryevenesse and remissoun. The other signe is humylitee in confessioun; of which seith Saint Peter: Humbleth you under the myght of God. The hond of God is myghty in confessioun, for therby God foryeveth thee thy synnes; for he allone hath the power. And this humylitee shal been in herte, and in signe outward; for right as he hath humylitee to God in his herte, right so sholde he humble his body outward to the preest that sit in Goddes place. for which in no manere, sith that Crist is sovereyn and the preest meene and mediatour bitwixe Crist and the synner, and the synner is the laste by wey of resoun, thanne sholde nat the synner sitte as heighe as his confessour, but knele biforn hym or at his feet, but if maladie distourbe it. for he shal nat taken kepe who sit there, but in whos place that he sitteth. A man that hath trespassed to a lord, and comth for to axe mercy and maken his accord, and set him down anon by the lord, men wolde holden hym outrageous, and nat worthy so soone for to have remissoun ne mercy. The thridde signe is

how that thy shrift sholde be ful of teeris, if man may; and if man may nat wepe with his bodily eyen, lat hym wepe in herte. Swich was the confessioun of Saint Peter; for after that he hadde forsake Jhesu Crist, for after that he hadde weep ful bitterly. The he wente out and weep ful bitterly. The fourthe signe is, that he ne lette nat for shame to shewen his confessioun. Swich was the confessioun of the Magdelene, that ne spared for no shame of hem that weren atte feeste, for to go to oure Lord Jhesu Crist & bikhnowe to hym hire synnes. The fyfthe signe is, that a man or a womman be obeisant to receyven the penance that hym is enjoyned for his synnes; for certes, Jhesu Crist, for the gyltes of a man, was obedient to the deeth. **T**HE seconde condicion of verray confessioun is, that it be hastily doon; for certes, if a man hadde a deedly wounde, evere the longer that he taried to warisshen hymself, the moore wolde it corrupte and haste hym to his deeth; and eek the wounde wolde be the wors for to heele. And right so fareth synne, that longe tyme is in a man unshewed. Certes, a man oughte hastily shewen his synnes for manye causes; as for drede of deeth, that cometh ofte sodenly, & is in no certeyn what tyme it shal be, ne in what place; & eek the drechynge of o synne draweth in another; and eek the longer that he tarieth, the ferther he is fro Crist. And if he abide to his laste day, scarcely may he shryven hym, or remembre hym of his synnes, or repenten hym, for the grevous maladie of his deeth. And forasmuche as he ne hath nat in his lyf herkned Jhesu Crist, whanne he hath spoken, he shal crie to Jhesu Crist at his laste day, and scarcely wol he herke hym. **A**nd understond that this condicioun mooste han foure thynges. Thi shrift mooste be purveyed bifore and avysed; for wikked haste dooth no profit; and that a man konne shryve hym of his synnes, be it of pride, or of envye, and so forth of the speces and circumstaunces; & that he have comprehended in his mynde the nombre and the greetnesse of his synnes, and how longe that he hath leyn in synne; & eek that he be contrit of his synnes, and in stidefast purpos, by the grace of God, nevere eft to falle in synne; and eek that he drede & countrewaite hymself, that he fle the occasions of synne to whiche he is enclyned. **A**L SO thou shalt shryve thee of alle thy synnes to o man, and nat a parcel to o man and a parcel to another; that is to understonde, in entente to departe thy confessioun as for shame or drede; for it nys but stranglyng of thy soule. for certes, Jhesu Crist is entierly al good; in hym nys noon imperfeccioun; and therefore

outhere he foryeveth al parfitly, or never a deel. I seye nat that if thou be assigned to the penitauncer for certein synne, that thou art bounde to shewen hym al the remenaunt of the synnes, of which thou hast be shryven to thy curaate, but if it like to thee of thyn humylitee; this is no departyng of shrifte. Ne I seye nat, theras I speke of divisoun of confessioun, that if thou have licence for to shryve thee to a discreet and an honeste preest, where thee liketh, and by licence of thy curaate, that thou nemayst wel shryve thee to him of alle thy synnes. But lat no blotte be bihynde; lat no synne been untold, as fer as thou hast remembrance. And whan thou shalt be shryven to thy curaate, telle hym eek alle the synnes that thou hast doon syn thou were last yshryven; this is no wikked entente of divisoun of shrifte.

AL SO, the verray shrifte axeth certein condiciouns. first, that thou shryve thee by thy freewil, noght constreyned, ne for shame of folk, ne for maladie, ne swiche thynges; for it is resoun that he that trespasseth by his free wyl, that by his free wyl he confesse his trespas; and that noon oother man telle his synne but he hymself; ne he shal nat nayte ne denye his synne, ne wratthe hym agayn the preest for his amonestyng to leve synne.

THE seconde condicioun is, that thy shrift be lawful; that is to seyn, that thou that shryvest thee, and eek the preest that bereth thy confessioun, been verrailly in the feith of hooley chirche; and that a man ne be nat despeired of the mercy of Jhesu Crist, as Caym or Judas. And eek a man moot accusen hymself of his owene trespas, and nat another; but he shal blame and wyten hymself & his owene malice of his synne, and noon oother; but natheless, if that another man be occasioun or enticere of his synne, or the estaat of a persone be swich thurgh which his synne is agregged, or elles that he may nat pleyntly shryven hym but he telle the persone with which he hath synned; thanne may he telle; so that his entente ne be nat to bakbite the persone, but only to declaren his confessioun. Thou ne shalt nat eek make no lesynges in thy confessioun; for humylitee, peraventure, to seyn that thou hast doon synnes of whiche that thou were nevere gilty. for Saint Augustyn seith: If thou, bycause of thyn humylitee makeest lesynges on thyself, though thou ne were nat in synne biforn, yet artow thanne in synne thurgh thy lesynges. Thou most eek shewe thy synne by thyn owene propre mouth, but thou be woxe down, and nat by no lettre; for thou that hast doon the synne, thou shalt have the

shame therefore. Thow shalt nat eek peynte thy confessioun by faire subtile wordes, to cove the moore thy synne; for thanne bigilestow thyself & nat the preest; thow most tellen it pleyntly, be it nevere so foul ne so horrible.

HOW shalt eek shryve thee to a preest that is discreet to conseil thee, and eek thou shalt nat shryve thee for veyne glorie, ne for ypoecrisye, ne for no cause, but oonly for the doute of Jhesu Crist and the heele of thy soule. Thow shalt nat eek renne to the preest sodeynly, to tellen hym lightly thy synne, as whoso telleth a jape or a tale, but avysely, & with greet devocioun. And generally, shryve thee ofte. If thou ofte falle, ofte thou arise by confessioun. And though thou shryve thee ofter than ones of synne, of which thou hast be shryven, it is the moore merite. And, as seith Seint Augustyn, thow shalt have the moore lightly relesyng & grace of God, bothe of synne & of peyne. And certes, oones a yere atte leeste wey it is laweful for to been housled; for certes, oones a yere alle thynges renouvellen. Now have I toold you of verray confessioun, that is the seconde partie of penitence.

Explicit secunda pars Penitencie; et sequitur tertia pars ejusdem.

THE thridde partie of penitence is satisfaccioun; and that stant moost generally in almesse, & in bodily peyne. Now been ther thre manere of almesses: contricioun of herte, where a man offreth hymself to God; another is, to han pitee of defaute of his neighbores; and the thridde is in yevyng of good conseil goostly and bodily, where men han nede, and namely in sustenance of mannes foode. And tak keep, that a man hath nede of these thynges generally; he hath nede of foode, he hath nede of clothynge & herberwe, he hath nede of charitable conseil, and visitynge in prisone and in maladie, and sepulture of his dede body. And if thow mayst nat visite the nedeful with thy persone, visite hym by thy message and by thy yiftes. Chise been generally almesses or werkes of charitee of hem that han temporeel riches or discrecioun in conseilynge. Of these werkes shaltow heeren at the day of doome.

THESE almesses shaltow doon of thyne owene propre thynges, and hastily, and prively if thow mayst; but natheless, if thow mayst nat doon it prively, thow shalt nat forbere to doon almesse though men seen it; so that it be nat doon for thank of the world, but oonly for thank of Jhesu Crist. For, as witnesseth Seint Mathew, capitulo quinto: A citee may nat been hyd that is set on a mon-

tainye; ne men lighte nat a lanterne and put it under a busshel; but men sette it on a candlestikke, to yeve light to the men in the hous. Right so shal youre light lighten to fore men, that they may seen youre goode werkes, and glorifie youre fader that is in hevene.

NO as to speken of bodily peyne; it stant in preyes, in wakynges, in fastynges, in vertuose techinges of orisouns or preyes is for to seyn a pitous wyl of herte, that redresseth it in God and expresseth it by word outward, to re-moeven harmes and to hanthynges espirituel & durable, and somtyme temporel thynges; of which orisouns, certes, in the orison of the Pater noster, hath Jhesu Crist enclosed moost thynges. Certes, it is priviledged of thre thynges in his dignitee, for which it is moore digne than any oother preye; for that Jhesu Crist hymself maketh it; and it is short, for it sholde be koud the moore lightly, and for to withholden it the moore easily in herte, & helpen hymself the ofter with the orison; and for a man sholde be the lasse very to seyn it, and for a man may nat excusen hym to lerne it, it is so short and so ey; and for it comprehendeth in itself alle goode preyes. The exposicioun of this hooly preye, that is so excellent and digne, I birote to thise maistres of theologie; save thus muchel wol I seyn: that whan thow prayest that God sholde foryeve thee thy gyltes as thou foryevest hem that agilen to thee, be ful wel war that thow be nat out of charitee. This hooly orison amenuseth eek veynyal synne; & therfore it aperteneth specially to penitence. This preye mooste be trewely seyde, and in verray feith, & that men preye to God ordinatly and discretly and devoutly; and alwey a man shal putten his wyl to be subget to the wille of God. This orison mooste eek been seyde with greet humblesse and ful pure; honestly, and nat to the anoyauce of any man or womman. It mooste eek been continued with the werkes of charitee. It avayleth eek agayn the vices of the soule; for, as seith Seint Jerome: By fastyng been saved the vices of the flesh, and by preye the vices of the soule. After this, thou shalt understonde, that bodily peyne stant in wakyng; for Jhesu Crist seith: Maketh, and preyeth that ye ne entre in wikked temptacioun. Ye shul understanden also, that fastyng stant in thre thynges; in forbyng of bodily mete and drynke, and in forbyng of worldly jolitee, and in forbyng of dedly synne; this is to seyn, that a man shal kepen hym fro dedly synne with al his myght.

AND thou shalt understanden eek, that God ordeyned fastyng; and to fastyng appertenen four thynges: largenesse to poore folk, gladnesse of herte espirituel, nat to been angry ne a-moyed, ne grucche for he fasteth; and also resonable hoire for to ete by mesure; that is for to seyn, a man shal nat ete in untyme, ne sette the lenger at his table to ete for he fasteth. Thanne shaltow understonde, that bodily peyne stant in disciplyne or techynge, by word and by writynge, or in ensample. Also in weryng of heyres or of stamyn, or of haubergeons on hire naked flesh, for Cristes sake, & swiche manere penances. But war thee wel that swiche manere penances on thy flesh ne make nat thyn herte bitter or angry or a-moyed of thyself; for better is to caste away thyn heyre, than for to caste away the sikernesseye, than for to caste away the sikernesseye of Jhesu Crist. And therfore seith Seint Paul: Clothyow, as they that been chosen of God, in herte of misericorde, debonairete, suffraunce, & swiche manere of clothynge; of which Jhesu Crist is moore a-moyed, of which heyres, or haubergeons, or payed than of heyres, or haubergeons, or hauberkes. Thanne is disciplyne eek in knokkyng of thy brest, in scourgyng with yerdes, in knelynges, in tribulaciouns; in suffryng paciently wronges that been doon to thee, and eek in pacient suffraunce of maladies, or lesyng of worldly catel, or of wyf, or of child, or of other freendes.

HANNE shaltow understonde, that swiche thynges destourben penance; and this is in foure maneres; that is, drede, shame, hope, and wanhope, that is, desperacioun. And for to speke first of drede; for which he demeth that he may suffre no penaunce. Ther agayns is remedie for to thynke that bodily penaunce is but short & litel, at regard of the peynes of helle, that is so crueel and so long that it lasteth withouten ende. Now agayn, the shame that a man hath to shryven hym, & namely, these ypoecrites that wolden been holden so parfite that they han no nede to shryven hem. Agayns that shame, sholde a man thynke that, by wey of resoun, that he that hath nat been ashamed to doon foule thynges, certes hym oghte nat been ashamed to do faire thynges, & that is confessiouns. A man sholde eek thynke that God seeth & woot alle his thoghtes and alle his werkes; to hym may no thyng been hyd ne covered. Men sholden eek remembren hem of the shame that is to come at the day of doome to hem that been nat penitent and shryven in this present lyf. For alle the creatures in erthe & in helle shullen seen apertly al that they hyden in this world.

NO for to speken of hope of hem that been negligent and slowe to shryven hem; that stant in two maneres. That

oon is, that he hopeth for to lyve longe and for to purchacen muche richesse for his delit, and thanne he wol shryven hym; & as he seith, hym semeth thanne tymely ynough to come to shrifte. Another is, surquidrie that he hath in Cristes mercy. Agayns the firste vice, he shal thynke, that oure life is in no sikernesseye; & eek that alle the riches in this world ben in aventure, and passen as a shadwe on the wal. And, as seith Seint Gregorie, that it aperteneth to the grete rightwisnesse of God, that nevere shal the peyne stynte, of hem that nevere wolde withdrawn hem fro synne, hir thanks, but ay continue in synne; for thilke perpetuel wil to dosynne shul they han perpetuel peyne.

WANHOPE is in two maneres: the firste wanhope is in the mercy of Crist; that oother is that they thynken that they nemyghten at longe persevere in goodnesse. The firste wanhope comth of that he demeth that he hath synned so greetly and so ofte, & so longe leyn in synne, that he shal nat be saved. Certes, agayns that cursed wanhope sholde he thynke, that the passion of Jhesu Crist is moore strong for to unbynde thanne synne is strong for to bynde. Agayns the seconde wanhope, he shal thynke, that as ofte as he falleth he may arise agayn by penitence; & though he nevere so longe have leyn in synne, the mercy of Crist is alwey redy to receiven hym to mercy. Agayns the wanhope, that he demeth that he sholde nat longe persevere in goodnesse, he shal thynke that the feblesse of the devel may nothyng doon but if men wol suffren hym; & eek he shal han strengthe of the help of God, and of al hooly chirche, and of the proteccioun of aungels, if hym list.

HANNE shal men understonde what is the fruyt of penaunce; and, after the word of Jhesu Crist, it is the endelees blisse of hevene. Ther joye hath no contrariouste of wone grevaunce; ther alle harmes been passed of this present lyf; theras is the sikernesseye fro the peyne of helle; theras is the blisful compaignye that rejoysen hem everemo, everich of ootheres joye; theras the body of man, that whilom was foul and derk, is moore cleer than the sonne; theras the body, that whilom was syk, freele, and fieble, and mortal, is immortal, and so strong and so hool that ther may nothyng a-peyren it; theras ne is neither hunger, thirst, ne coold, but every soule replenysed with the sighte of the parfite knowynge of God. This blisful regne may men purchace by povertie espirituel, and the glorie by lowenesse; the plentee of joye by hunger and thirst, & the reste by travaille; and the lyf by deeth and mortificacioun of synne.



Here taketh the makere of this book his leve.

NOW preye I to hem alle that herkne this litel tretys or rede, that if ther be any-thing in it that liketh hem, that therof they thanken oure Lord Jhesu Crist, of whom procedeth al wit and al goodnesse. And if ther be anythyng that displese hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unkonnyng, and nat to my wyl, that wolde ful fayn have seyde better if I hadde had konnyng. for oure boke seith: Al that is writen is writen for oure doctrine, and that is myn entente. **W**herfore I biseke yow mekely, for the mercy of God, that ye preye for me, that Crist have mercy on me & foryeve me my giltes: and namely, of my translaciouns and enditynges of worldly vanitees, the whiche I revoke in my retracciouns: as is The book of Troylus; The book also of fame; The book of the Nynetene Ladies; The book of the Duchesse; The book of Saint Valentyne's day of the Parlement of Briddes; The Tales of Caunterbury, thilke that

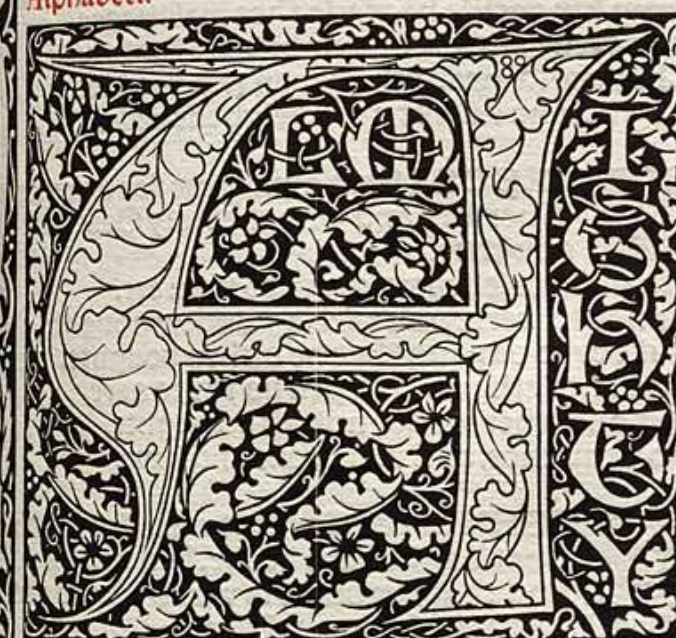
sowen into synne; The book of the Leoun; and many another book, if they were in my remembrance; and many a song, and many a lecherous lay; that Crist, for his grette mercy, foryeve me the synne. **B**ut of the translacioun of Boece de Consolacione, & othere bookes of Legendes of Seintes, and omelies, and moralitee, & devocioun, that thanke I oure Lord Jhesu Crist and his blisful mooder, & alle the seintes of hevene; bisekyng hem that they from henneforth, unto my lyves ende, sende me grace to biwayle my giltes, & to studie to the salvacioun of my soule: and graunte me grace of verray penitence, confessioun and satisfaccioun to doon in this present lyf; thurgh the benigne grace of hym that is kyng of kynges, and preest over alle preestes, that boghte us with the precious blood of his herte; so that I may been oon of hem at the day of doome that shulle be saved. **Q**uicum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula. Amen.

Heere is ended the book of the Tales of Caunterbury, compiled by Geoffrey Chaucer, of whos soule Jhesu Crist have mercy. Amen.



HN A.B.C. OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Incipit carmen secundum ordinem literarum Alphabeti.



AND AL MERCHABLE QUENE,
To whom that al this world fleeth for
socour,
To have relees of sinne, sorwe and tene,
Glorious virgine, of alle floures flour,

To thee I flee, confounded in errour!
Help and releve, thou mighty debonaire,
Have mercy on my perilous langour!
Venquished me hath my cruel adversaire.

BOUNTEE so fix hath in thyn herte
his tente,
That wel I wot thou wolt my
socour be,
Thou canst not warne him that, with good
entente,
Axeth thyn help. Thyn herte is ay so free,
Thou art largesse of pleyne felicitie,
Haven of refut, of quite and of reate.
Lo, how that theves seven chasen me!
Help, lady bright, er that my ship to breste!

COMFORT is noon, but in yow, lady
dere,
for lo, my sinne and my confusioun,
Which oughten not in thy presence appere,
Han take on me a grevous accioun
Of verrey right and desperacioun;
And, as by right, they mighten wel sustene
That I were worthy my dampnacioun,
Nere mercy of you, blisful hevene quene.

NOOTE is ther noon, thou queen of misericorde,
That thou nart cause of grace and mercy here;
God vouches sauf thurgh thee with us tacorde.
for certes, Cristes blisful moder dere,
Were now the bowe bent in swich manere,
As it was first, of justice and of yre,
The rightful God nolde of no mercy here;
But thurgh thee han we grace, as we desyre.

EVER hath myn hope of refut been in thee,
for heerbifom ful ofte, in many a wyse,
Hast thou to misericorde receyved me.
But mercy, lady, at the grete assyse,
Whan we shul come bifore the hye justyse!
So litel fruit shal thanne in me be founde,
That, but thou er that day me wel chastyse,
Of verrey right my werk me wol confounde.

FLEEING, I flee for socour to thy tente
Me for to hyde from tempest ful of drede,
Biseching you that ye you not absente,
Though I be wikke. O help yit at this nede!
Al have I been a beste in wille and dede,
Yit, lady, thou me clothe with thy grace.
Thyn enemy and myn, lady, tak hede,
Unto my deth in poynt is me to chace.

GLORIOUS mayde and moder, which
that never
Were bitter, neither in erthe nor in see,
But ful of swetnesse and of mercy ever,
Help that my fader be not wroth with me!
Spek thou, for I ne dar not him ysee.
So have I doon in erthe, alas therwhyte!
That certes, but if thou my socour be,
To stink eterne he wol my gost exyle.

HE vouches sauf, tel him, as was his wille,
Bicome a man, to have our alliaunce,
And with his precious blood he wroot
the bille
Upon the crois, as general acquitaunce,
To every penitent in ful creaunce;
And therfor, lady bright, thou for us praye.
Than shalt thou bothe stinte al his grevaunce,
And make our foo to failen of his praye.

NOOT it wel, thou wolt ben our socour,
Thou art so ful of bountee, in certeyn.
for whan a soule falleth in errour,
Thy pitee goth and haleth him ayeyn.
Than makest thou his pees with his sovereyn,
And bringest him out of the crooked strete.
Whoso thee loveth he shal not love in veyn,
That shal he finde, as he the lyf shal lete.

KLENDERES enlumined ben they
That in this world ben lighted with
thy name,
And whoso goth to you the righte wey,

Him thar not drede in soule to be lame.
Now, queen of comfort, sith thou art that same,
To whom I seche for my medicyne,
Lat not my foo no more my wounde entame,
Myn hele into thyn hand al I resigne.

LADY, thy sorwe can I not portreye
Under the cros, ne his grevous penaunce.
But, for your bothes peynes, I you prey,
Lat nat our alder foo make his bobaunce,
That he hath in his listes of mischaunce,
Convict that ye bothe have bought so dere.
As I seide erst, thou ground of our substaunce,
Continue on us thy pitous eyen clere!

MOISES, that saugh the bush with flumes
rede
Brenninge, of which ther never a stikhe
brende,
Was signe of thyn unwemmed maiden hede.
Thou art the bush on which ther gan descende
The Holy Gost, the which that Moises wende
Had ben a fyr; and this was in figure.
Now lady, from the fyr thou us defende
Which that in helle eternally shal dure.

NOBLE princesse, that never haddest pen,
Certes, if any comfort in us be,
That cometh of thee, thou Cristes moder
dere,
We han non other melodye or glee
As to rejoyse in our adversitee,
Ne advocat noon that wol and dar so prey
for us, and that for litel hyre as ye,
That helpen for an Ave/Marie or tweye.

VERREY light of eyen that ben blinde,
O verrey lust of labour and distresse,
O tresorere of bountee to mankinde,
Thee whom God chees to moder for humbleste!
from his ancille he made thee maistresse
Of hevne and erthe, our bille up for to bede.
This world awaiteth ever on thy goodnesse,
for thou ne failest never wight at nede.

PURPOS I have sum tyme for tenquer,
Wherfore and why the Holy Gost thee
soughte,
Whan Gabrielles vois cam to thyn ere.
He not to werre us swich a wonder wroughte,
But for to save us that he sithen boughte.
Than nedeth us no wepen us for to save,
But only ther we did not, as us oughte,
Do penitence, and mercy axe and have.

QUEEN of comfort, yit whan I me bitimbe
That I agilt have bothe, him and thee,
And that my soule is worthy for to simbe
Allas, I, caitif, whider may I flee?
Who shal unto thy sone my mene be?
Who, but thyself, that art of pitee welle?
Thou hast more reuthe on our adversitee
Than in this world mighte any tunge telle.

REDRESSE me, moder, and me chastyse,
for, certeynly, my fadres chastisinge
That dar I nought abyden in no wyse:
So hidous is his rightful rekeninge.
Moder, of whom our mercy gan to springe,
Beth ye my juge and eek my soules leche;
for ever in you is pitee haboundinge
To ech that wol of pitee you biseche.

BOTH is, that God ne graunteth no pitee
Withoute thee; for God, of his goodnesse,
forgiveth noon, but it like unto thee.
He hath thee maked vicaire and maistresse
Of al the world, and eek governeresse
Of hevne, and he represeth his justyse
After thy wille, and therefore in wisesse
He hath thee crowned in so ryal wyse.

EMPLI devout, ther God hath his woninge,
fro which these misbileded pryved been,
To you my soule penitent I bringe.
Receyve me! I can no further flee!
With thornes venimous, O hevne queen,
for which the erthe acursed was ful yore,
I am so wounded, as ye may wel seen,
That I am lost almost; it smert so sore.

VIRGINE, that art so noble of appaile,
And ledest us into the hye tour
Of Paradyse, thou me wisse and counsaile,
How I may have thy grace and thy socour;
Al have I been in filthe and in errour.
Lady, unto that court thou me ajourne
That cleped is thy bench, O fresshe flour!
Theras that mercy ever shal sojourne.

XRISTUS, thy sone, that in this world
alighte,
Upon the cros to suffre his passioun,
And suffred eek, that Longius him pighte,
And made his herte blood to renne adoun;
And al was this for my salvacioun;
And I to him am fals and eek unkinde,
And yit he wol not my dampnacioun,
This thanke I you, socour of al mankinde.

SHHC was figure of his deeth, certeyn,
That so ferforth his fader wolde obeye
That him ne roughte nothing to be slayn;
Right so thy sone list, as a lamb, to deye.
Now lady, ful of mercy, I you prey,
Sith he his mercy mesured so large,
Be ye not shant; for alle we singe and seye
That ye ben from vengeance ay our targe.

ZACHARIE you clepeth the open welle
To wasshe sinful soule out of his gilt.
Therfore this lessoun oughte I wel to telle
That, nere thy tender herte, we weren spilt.
Now lady brighte, sith thou canst and wilt
Ben to the seed of Adam merciable,
So bring us to that palais that is bilt
To penitents that ben to mercy able. Amen.

Explicit carmen.

THE COMPLEYNTE UNTO PITE.

PITE, that I have sought so
yore ago,
With herte sore, and ful of
besy peyne,
That in this world was
never wight so wo
Withoute dethe; and, if I
shal not feyne,
My purpos was, to Pite to
compleyne
Upon the crueltee and tiranny
Of Love, that for my trouthe doth me dye.

And when that I, by lengthe of certeyn yeres,
Had ever in oon a tyme sought to speke,
To Pite ran I, al bespreynt with teres,
To preyen hir on Crueltee me awreke.
But, er I might with any worde outbreke,
Or tellen any of my peynes smerte,
I fond hir deed, and buried in an herte.

Adoun I fel, whan that I saugh the herse,
Deed as a stoon, whyl that the swogh me laste;
But up I roos, with colour ful diverse;
And pitously on hir myn yen caste,
And ner the corps I gan to presen faste,
And for the soule I shoop me for to prey;
I nas but lorn; ther nas no more to seye.

Thus am I slayn, sith that Pite is deed;
Allas! that day! that ever hit shulde falle!
What maner man dar now holde up his heed?
To whom shal any sorwful herte calle?
Now Crueltee hath cast to sleen us alle,
In ydel hope, folk redelees of peyne,
Sith she is deed, to whom shul we compleyne?

But yet encreseth me this wonder newe,
That no wight woot that she is deed, but I;
So many men as in hir tyme hir knewe,
And yet she dyed not so sodeynly;
for I have sought hir ever ful besily
Sith first I hadde wit or mannes mynde;
But she was deed, er that I coude hir fynde.

Aboute hir herse ther stoden lustily,
Withouten any wo, as thoughte me,
Bountee parfit, wel armed and richely,
And fresshe Beautee, Lust, and Jolitee,
Assured Maner, Youthe, and Honestee,
Wisdom, Estaat, and Dreed, and Gouvernaunce,
Confedred bothe by bonde and alliaunce.

A compleynt hadde I, writen, in myn hond,
for to have put to Pite as a bille,
But whan I al this compaignie ther fond,
That rather wolden al my cause spille
Than do me help, I held my pleynte stille;
for to that folk, withouten any faile,
Withoute Pite may no bille availe.

Then leve I al thise virtues, sauf Pite,
Keping the corps, as ye have herd me seyn,

Confedred alle by bonde of Crueltee,
And been assented that I shal be sleyn.
And I have put my compleynt up ageyn;
For to my foos my bille I dar not shewe,
Theffect of which seith thus, in wordes fewe:

The Bille.

HUMBLEST of herte, hiest
of reverence,
Benigne flour, coroune of
vertues alle,
Sheweth unto your rial
excellence
Your servaunt, if I durste
me so calle,
His mortal harm, in which he
is yfalle,
And nocht al only for his evel fare,
But for your renoun, as he shal declare.

Hit stondeth thus: your contraire, Crueltee,
Allyed is ageynst your regalye
Under colour of womanly Beautee,
for men ne shuld not knowe hir tyrannye,
With Bountee, Gentillesse, and Curtesye,
And hath depyrved you now of your place
That hight Beautee, apertenant to Grace.

for kyndly, by your heritage right,
Ye been annexed ever unto Bountee;
And verrayly ye oughte do your might
To helpe Trouthe in his adversitee.
Ye been also the coroune of Beautee;
And certes, if ye wanten in thise tweyne,
The world is lore; ther nis no more to seyne.

Seke what availleth Maner and Gentillesse
Withoute you, benigne creature?
Shal Crueltee be your governeresse?
Allas! what herte may hit longe endure?
Wherfor, but ye the rather take cure
To breke that perilous alliaunce,
Ye sleen hem that ben in your obeisaunce.

And further over, if ye suffre this,
Your renoun is fordo than in a throwe;
Ther shal no man wite wel what Pite is.
Allas! that your renoun shul be so lowe!
Ye be than fro your heritage ythrowe
By Crueltee, that occupieth your place;
And we despeired, that seken to your grace.

Have mercy on me, thou Herenus quene,
That you have sought so tenderly and yore;
Let som stream of your light on me be sene
That love and drede you, ay lenger the more.
for, sothly for to seyne, I bere the sore,
And, though I be not cunning for to pleyne,
for Goddes love, have mercy on my peyne!

My peyne is this, that whatso I desire
That have I not, ne nothing lyk therto;
And ever set Desire myn herte on fire;

Seke on that other syde, wherso I go,
What maner thing that may encrease wo
That have I redy, unsoght, everywhere;
Me ne lakketh but my deth, and than my bere.

What nedeth to shewe parcel of my peyne?
Sith every wo that herte may bethinke
I suffre, and yet I dar not to you pleyne;
for wel I woot, although I wake or winke,
Ye rekke not whether I flete or sinke,
But natheles, my trouthe I shal sustene
Unto my deth, and that shal wel be sene.

This is to seyne, I wol be yores ever;
Though ye me slee by Crueltee, your fo,
Algate my spirit shal never dissever
fro your servyse, for any peyne or wo.
Sith ye be deed, alas! that hit is so!
Thus for your deth I may wel wepe and pleyne
With herte sore and ful of besy peyne.
Here endeth the exclamacion of the Deth of
Pyte.

THE COMPLEYNT OF MARS.
The Proem.

LADETH, ye foules, of the
morow gray,
Lo! Venus risen among yon
rowes rede!
And floures fresshe, hon-
oureth ye this day;
for when the sonne uprist,
then wol ye sprede,
But ye lovers, that lye in any
drede,
fleeth, lest wikked tonges yow espye;
Lo! yond the sonne, the candel of jelosye!

With teres blewe, and with a wounded herte
Taketh your leve; and, with seynt John to
borow,
Apseth somwhat of your sorowes smerte,
Tyme cometh eft, that cese shal your sorow;
The glade night is worth an hevy morow!
(Seynt Valentyne! a foul thus herde I singe
Upon thy day, er sonne gan upsprunge).

Yet sang this foul: I rede yow al awake,
And ye, that han not chosen in humble wyse,
Without repenting cheseth yow your make.
And ye, that han ful chosen as I devyse,
Yet at the leste renoveleth your servyse;
Confermeth it perpetuely to dure,
And paciently taketh your aventure.

And for the worship of this hye feste,
Yet wol I, in my briddes wyse, singe
The sentence of the compleynt, at the leste,
That woful Mars made atte departinge
fro fresshe Venus in a morweninge,
Whan Phebus, with his fryr torches rede,
Ransaked every lover in his drede.

WHYLOM the thridde
hevenes lord above,
As wel by hevenish
revolucoun
As by desert, hath wonne
Venus his love,
And she hath take him in
subjeccioun,
And as a maistresse
taught him his lessoun,
Comaunding him that never, in hir servyse,
he nere so bold no lover to despyse.

for she forbad him jelosye al alle,
And cruelte, and bost, and tyrannye;
She made him at hir lust so humble and talle,
That when hir deynd caste on hym her ye
he took in pacience to live or dye;
And thus she brydeleth him in hir manere,
With nothing but with scourging of hir chere.

Who regneth now in blisse, but Venus,
That hath this worthy knight in governaunce?
Who singeth now but Mars, that serveth thus
The faire Venus, causer of plesaunce?
he bynt him to perpetual obeisaunce,
And she bynt hir to loven him for ever,
But so be that his trespas hit dissever.

Thus be they knit, and regnen as in heven
By loking most; til hit fil, on a tyde,
That by hir bothe assent was set a steven,
That Mars shal entre, as faste as he may glyde,
Into hir nexte paleys, to abyde,
Walking his cours til she had him atake,
And he preyde hir to haste hir for his sake.

Then seyde he thus: Myn hertes lady swete,
Ye knowe wel my mischef in that place;
for sikely, til that I with yow mete,
My lyf stant ther in aventure and grace;
But when I see the beaute of your face,
Ther is no drede of deth may do me smerte,
for al your lust is ese to myn herte.

She hath so gret compassion of hir knight,
That dwelleth in solitude til she come;
for hit stood so, that ilke tyme, no wight
Counseyled him, ne seyde to him welcome,
That nigh hir wit for wo was overcome;
Wherfore she spedde hir as faste in hir weye,
Almost in oon day, as he dide in tweye.

The grette joye that was bitwix hem two,
Whan they be met, ther may no tunge telle,
Ther is no more, but unto bed they go,
And thus in joye and blisse I lete hem dwelle;
This worthy Mars, that is of knighthod welle,
The flour of fairnes lappeth in his armes,
And Venus kisseth Mars, the god of armes.

Sojourned hath this Mars, of which I rede,
In chambre amid the paleys prively

A certeyn tyme, til him fel a drede,
Through Phebus, that was comen hastely
Within the paleys/yates sturdely,
With torche in honde, of which the stremes
bryghte
On Venus chambre knockeden ful lighte.

The chambre, ther as lay this fresshe quene,
Depeynted was with whyte boles grette,
And by the light she knew, that shoon so shene,
That Phebus cam to brenne hem with his hete;
This sely Venus, dreyn in teres wete,
Enbraceth Mars, and seyde, Alas! I dye!
The torch is come, that al this world wol wrye.

Up sterte Mars, him liste not to slepe,
Whan he his lady herde so compleyne;
But, for his nature was not for to wepe,
Instede of teres, fro his even tweyne
The fryr sparkes brosten out for peyne;
And hente his hauberke, that lay him besyde;
flee wolde he not, ne mighte himselven hyde.

He throweth on his helm of huge wighte,
And girt him with his swerde; and in his honde
His mighty spere, as he was wont to fighte,
He shaketh so that almost it towonde;
ful hevy he was to walken over londe;
He may not holde with Venus companye,
But bad hir flee, lest Phebus hir espye.

O woful Mars! alas! what mayst thou seyn,
That in the paleys of thy disturbaunce
Art left behinde, in peril to be sleyn?
And yet therto is double thy penaunce,
for she, that hath thyn herte in governaunce,
Is passed halfe the stremes of thyn yen;
That thou nere swift, wel mayst thou wepe
and cryen.

Now fleeth Venus unto Cylenius tour,
With voide cours, for fere of Phebus light.
Alas! and ther ne hath she no socour,
for she ne fond ne saw no maner wight;
And eek as ther she had but litil might;
Wherfor, hirselves for to hyde and save,
Within the gate she fledde into a cave.

Derk was this cave, and smoking as the helle,
Not but two pas within the gate hit stood;
A naturel day in derk I lete hir dwelle.
Now wol I speke of Mars, furious and wood;
for sorow he wolde have seen his herte blood;
Sith that he mighte hir don no companye,
he ne roghte not a myte for to dye.

So feble he wex, for hete and for his wo,
That nigh he swelt, he mighte unmethe endure;
He passeth but oo steyre in dayes two,
But ner the les, for al his hevy armure,
he foloweth hir that is his lyes cure;
for whos departing he took gretter yre
Thanne for al his brenning in the fyre.

After he walketh softly a pas,
Compleynning, that hit pite was to here.
He seyde, O lady bright, Venus! alas!
That ever so wyde a compass is my spere!
Alas! whan shal I mete yow, herte dere,
This twelfte day of April I endure,
Through jelous Phebus, this misaventure.

Now God helpe sely Venus allone!
But, as God wolde, hit happed for to be,
That, whyl that Venus weping made hir mone,
Cylenius, ryding in his chevauche,
fro Venus valance mighte his paleys see,
And Venus he salueth, and maketh chere,
And hir receyvethe as his frend ful dere.

Mars dwelleth forth in his adversite,
Compleynning ever on hir departing;
And what his compleynt was, remembreth me;
And therefore, in this lusty mornynge,
As I best can, I wol hit seyn and singe,
And after that I wol my leve take;
And God yeve every wight joye of his make!

THE COMPLEYNT OF MARS.
The Proem of the Compleynt.

The ordre of compleynt re-
quireth skilfully,
That if a wight shal pleyne
pitously,
Ther mot be cause wherfor
that men pleyne;
Or men may deme he pleyne
eth folly
And causeles; alas! that
am not I!

Wherfor the ground and cause of al my payne,
So as my troubled wit may hit ateyne,
I wol reherse; not for to have redresse,
But to declare my ground of hevinesse.

The firste tyme, alas! that I
was wroght,
And for certeyn effectes
hider broght
By him that lordeth ech
intelligence,
I yaf my trewe servise and
my thought,
For evermore... how dere I
have hit boght!

To hir, that is of so gret excellence,
That what wight that first sheweth his presence,
Whan she is wroth and taketh of him no cure,
He may not longe in joye of love endure.

This is no feyned mater that I telle;
My lady is the verrey sours and welle
Of beaute, lust, fredom, and gentillesse,
Of riche aray... how dere men hit selle!
Of al disport in which men frendly dwelle,
Of love and pley, and of benigne humblesse,
Of sounes of instruments of al swetnesse;
And therto so wel fortunad and thewed,

That through the world hir goodnesse is yshewed.

What wonder is then, thogh that I besette
My servise on suche oon, that may me knette
To wele or wo, sith hit lyth in hir might?
Therfor my herte for ever I to hir hette;
Ne trewly, for my dethe, I shal not lette
To ben hir trewest servaunt and hir knight.
I flater noght, that may wite every wight;
for this day in hir servise shal I dye;
But grace be, I see hir never with ye.



O whom shal I than pleyne
of my distresse?
Who may me helpe, who
may my harm redresse?
Shal I compleyne unto my
lady free?
Nay, certes! for she hath
such hevinesse,
for fere and eek for wo,
that, as I gesse,
In litil tyme hit wol hir bane be.

But were she sauf, hit were no fors of me.
Alas! that ever lovers mote endure,
for love, so many a perilous aventure!

for thogh so be that lovers be as trewe
As any metel that is forged newe,
In many a cas hem tydeth ofte sorowe.
Somytyme hir ladies will not on hem rewte,
Somytyme, yif that jelousy hit knewe,
They mighten lightly leye hir heed to borowe;
Somytyme envyous folk with tungen horowe
Depraven hem; alas! whom may they plesse?
But he be fals, no lover hath his ese.

But what availleth suche a longe sermoun
Of adventures of love, up and down?
I wol returne and speken of my payne;
The point is this of my destruccioun,
My righte lady, my salvacioun,
Is in affray, and not to whom to pleyne.
O herte swete, O lady sovereyne!
for your disese, wel oghte I swoune and swelte,
Thogh I non other harm ne drede felte.



O what fyn made the god
that sit so hye,
Benethen him, love other
compane,
And streyneth folk to love,
malgre hir hede?
And then hir joye, for oght
I can espye,
Ne lasteth not the twinkling
of an ye.

And somme han never joye til they be dede.
What meneth this? what is this mistibede?
Wherto constreyneth he his folk so faste
Thyng to desyre, but hit shulde laste?

And thogh he made a lover love a thing,

And maketh hit seme stedfast and during,
Yet putteth he in hit such misaventure,
That reeste his ther noon in his yeving.
And that is wonder, that so just a king
Doth such hardnesse to his creature.
Thus, whether love breke or elles dure,
Higates he that hath with love to done
hath ofter wo then changed is the mone.

hit semeth he hath to lovers enmite,
And lyk a fisher, as men alday may see,
Baiteth his angle/hook with som plesaunce,
Til mony a fish is wood til that he be
sessed therwith; and then at erst hath he
At his desyr, and therwith al mischaunce;
And thogh the lyne breke, he hath penaunce;
for with the hoke he wounded is so sore,
That he his wages hath for evermore.



The broche of Thebes was
of suche a kinde,
So ful of rubies and of
stones Inde,
That every wight, that
sette on hit an ye,
He wende anon to worthe
out of his minde;
So sore the beaute wold
his herte binde,
Til he hit hadde, him thoughte he moste dye;
And whan that hit was his, than shulde he drye
Such wo for drede, ay whyl that he hit hadde,
That welnigh for the fere he shulde madd.

And whan hit was fro his possessioun,
Than had he double wo and passioun
for he so fair a tresor had forgo;
But yet this broche, as in conclusioun,
Was not the cause of this confusioun;
But he that wroghte hit enfortuned hit so,
That every wight that had it shuld have wo;
And therfor in the worcher was the vyce,
And in the covetour that was so nyce.

So fareth hit by lovers and by me;
for thogh my lady have so gret beaute,
That I was mad til I had gete hir grace,
She was not cause of myn adversite,
But he that wroghte hir, also mot I thee,
That putte suche a beaute in hir face,
That made me to covete and purchase
Myn owne deth; him wyte I that I dye,
And myn unwit, that ever I clomb so hye.



But to yow, hardy knightes
of renoun,
Sin that ye be of my divi-
sioun,
Al be I not worthy so grete
a name,
Yet, seyn these clerkes, I
am your patroun;
Therfor ye oghte have som
compassioun

Of my disese, and take it noght agame.
The proudest of yow may be mad ful
tame;
Wherfor I prey yow, of your gentillesse,
That ye compleyne for myn hevinesse.

And ye, my ladies, that ben trewe and
stable,
By way of kinde, ye oghten to be able
To have pite of folk that be in payne;
Now have ye cause to clothe yow in sable;
Sith that your emperice, the honorable,
Is desolat, wel oghte ye to pleyne;
Now shuld your holy teres falle and reyne.
Alas! your honour and your emperice,
Nigh deed for drede, ne can hir not chevis.

Compleyneth eek, ye lovers, al in fere,
for hir that, with unfeyned humble chere,
Was ever redy to do yow socour;
Compleyneth hir that ever hath had yow
dere;
Compleyneth beaute, fredom, and manere;
Compleyneth hir that endeth your labour;
Compleyneth thilke ensample of al
honour,
That never dide but al gentillesse;
Kytheth therfor on hir some kindenesse.

THE COMPLEYNT OF VENUS.

THER nis so hy comfort
to my plesaunce,
Whan that I am in any
hevinesse,
As for to have leyser of
remembraunce
Upon the manhod and
the worthinesse,
Upon the trouthe, and
on the stedfastnesse
Of him whos I am al, whyl I may dure;
Ther oghte blame me no creature,
for every wight preiseth his gentillesse.

In him is bountee, wisdom, governaunce
Wel more then any mannes wit can gesse;
for grace hath wold so ferforth him
avaunce
That of knighthode he is parfit richesse.
Honour honoureth him for his noblesse;
Therto so wel hath formed him Nature,
That I am his for ever, I him assure,
for every wight preiseth his gentillesse.

And notwithstanding al his suffisaunce,
His gentil herte is of so gret humblesse
To me in worde, in werke, in contenaunce,
And me to serve is al his besinesse,
That I am set in verrey sikernesse.
Thus oghte I blesse wel myn aventure,
Sith that him list me serven and honoure;
for every wight preiseth his gentillesse.



OW certes, Love, hit is right
covenable
That men ful dere bye thy
noble thing,
As wake abedde, and fasten
at the table,
Weeping to laughe, & singe
in compleyning,
And down to caste visage
and loking,
Often to chaungen hewe and contenance,
Pleyne in sleping, and dremen at the daunce,
At the revers of any glad feling.

Jalousye be hanged by a cable!
She wolde al knowe through hir espying;
Ther doth no wight nothing so resonable,
That al nis harm in hir imagening.
Thus dere abought is love in yeving,
Which ofte he yiveth withouten ordinaunce,
As sorow ynogh, and litel of plesaunce,
At the revers of any glad feling.

A litel tyme his yift is agreable,
But ful encomberous is the using;
for sotel jalousye, the deceyvable,
ful oftentyme causeth destourbing.
Thus be we ever in drede and suffering,
In nouncerteyn we languishe in penaunce,
And han ful often many an hard meschaunce,
At the revers of any glad feling.



UT certes, Love, I sey nat in
such wyse
That for tescap out of your
lace I mente;
for I so longe have been in
your servyse
That for to lete of wol I
never assente;
No force thogh jalousye me
tormente;
Suffyceth me to see him when I may,
And therfore certes, to myn ending day
To love him best ne shal I never repente.

And certes, Love, whan I me wel avyse
On any estat that man may represente,
Than have ye maked me, through your franchyse,
Chese the best that ever on erthe wente.
Now love wel, herte, and look thou never stente;
And let the jelous putte hit in assay
That, for no peyne wol I nat sey nay;
To love him best ne shal I never repente.

Herte, to thee hit oghte ynogh suffyase
That Love so hy a grace to thee sente,
To chese the worthiest in alle wyse
And most agreable unto myn entente.
Seche no ferther, neyther wey ne wente,
Sith I have suffisaunce unto my pay.
Thus wol I ende this compleynt or lay;
To love him best ne shal I never repente.



PRINCESS, receyveth this
compleynt in gree,
Unto your excellent be-
nignitee
Direct after my litel suf-
fisaunce,
For eld, that in my spirit
dulleth me,
Hath of endyting al the
soteltee
Wel ny bereft out of my remembrance;
And eek to me hit is a greet penaunce;
Sith rym in English hath swich scarsitee,
To folowe word by word the curiositee
Of Graunson, flour of hem that make in fraunce.

ANELIDA AND ARCITE, ✱
The Complaynt of feire Anelida and fals Arcite.
Proem.



HOW ferse god of armes,
Mars the rede,
That in the frosty country
called Trace,
Within thy grisly temple
ful of drede
Honoured art, as patroun
of that place!
With thy Bellona, Pallas,
ful of grace,
Be present, and my song continue and gye;
At my beginning thus to thee I crye.

for hit ful depe is sonken in my minde,
With pitous herte in English for tendyte
This olde storie, in Latin which I finde,
Of quene Anelida and fals Arcite,
That elde, which that al can frete and byte,
As hit hath fretten mony a noble storie,
Hath nigh devoured out of our memorie.

Be favorable eek, thou Polymnia,
On Parnaso that, with thy sustres glade,
By Elicon, not fer from Circea,
Singest with vois memorial in the shade,
Under the laurer which that may not fade,
And do that I my ship to haven winne;
first folow I Stace, and after him Corinne.

Iamque domos patrias, &c.: Statii Thebais. xii. 59.



WHAN Theseus, with wenes
longe and grete,
The aspre folk of Cithe
had overcome,
With laurer crowned, in his
char gold/bete,
Boom to his contre/houses
is ycome;...
for which the peple blis-
ful, al and somme,
So cryden, that unto the sterres hit wente,
And him to honouren dide al hir entente;...

Before this duk, in signe of hy victorie,
The trompes come, and in his baner large
The image of Mars; and, in token of glorie,
Men mighten seen of tresor many a charge,
Many a bright helm, and many a spere and targe,
Many a fresh knight, and many a blisful route,
On hors, on fote, in al the felde aboute.

Ipolita his wyf, the hardy quene
Of Cithia, that he conquered hadde,
With Emelye, hir yonge suster shene,
Faire in a char of golde he with him ladde,
That al the ground aboute hir char she spradde
With brightnesse of the beautee in hir face,
fulfil of largesse and of alle grace.

With his triumpe and laurer/crowned thus,
In al the flour of fortunes yevinge,
Lette I this noble prince Theseus
Toward Athenes in his wey rydinge,
And founde I wol in shortly for to bringe
The slye wey of that I gan to wryte,
Of quene Anelida and fals Arcite.

Mars, which that through his furious course of
yre,
The olde wrath of Juno to fulfille,
Hath set the peples hertes bothe on fyre
Of Thebes and Grece, everich other to kille
With bloody speres, ne rested never stille,
But throng now her, now ther, among hem bothe,
That everich other slough, so wer they wrothe.

for whan Amphiorax and Tydeus,
Ipomedon, Parthonopee also
Were dede, and slayn was proud Campaneus,
And whan the wrecches Thebans, bretheren two,
Were slayn, and king Adrastus boom ago,
So desolat stood Thebes and so bare,
That no wight coude remedie of his care.

And whan the olde Creon gan espye
How that the blood roial was broght adoun,
He held the cite by his tyrannye,
And did the gentils of that regioun
To been his frendes, and dwellen in the toun.
So what for love of him, and what for awe,
The noble folk wer to the toun ydrawe.

Among al these, Anelida the quene
Of Emmony was in that toun dwellinge,
That fairer was then is the sonne shene;
Throughout the world so gan hir name springe,
That hir to seen had every wight lykinge;
for, as of trouthe, is ther noon hir liche,
Of al the women in this worlde riche.

Yonge was this quene, of twenty yeer of elde,
Of midel stature, and of swich fairnesse,
That nature had a joye hir to behelde;
And for to speken of hir stedfastnesse,
She passed hath Penelope and Lucresse,
And shortly, if she shal be comprehended,
In hir ne mighte nothing been amended.

This Theban knight Arcite eek, sooth to seyn,
Was yong, and therewithal a lusty knight,
But he was double in love and nothing pleyne,
And subtil in that crafte over any wight,
And with his cunning wan this lady bright;
for so ferforth he gan hir trouthe assure,
That she him trust over any creature.

What shuld I seyn? she loved Arcite so,
That, whan that he was absent any throwe,
Anon hir thoghte hir herte brast atwo;
for in hir sight to hir he bar him lowe,
So that she wende have al his herte yknowe;
But he was fals; it nas but feyned chere,
As nedeth not to men such craft to lere.

But nevertheles ful mikel besinesse
Had he, er that he mighte his lady winne,
And swoor he wolde dyen for distresse,
Or from his wit he seyde he wolde twinne.
Alas, the why! for hit was routhe and sinne,
That she upon his sorowes wolde rewe,
But nothing thenketh the fals as doth the trewe.

Hir fredom fond Arcite in swich manere,
That al was his that she hath, moche or lyte,
Ne to no creature made she chere
ferther than that hit lyked to Arcite;
Ther was no lak with which he mighte hir wyte,
She was so ferforth yeven him to plesse,
That al that lyked him, hit did hir ese.

Ther nas to hir no maner lettre ysent
That touched love, from any maner wight,
That she ne shewed hit him, er hit was brent;
So pleyne she was, and did hir fulle might,
That she nil hyden nothing from hir knight,
Lest he of any untrouthe hir upbreyde;
Withouten bode his heste she obeyde.

And eek he made him jelous over here,
That, what that any man had to hir seyde,
Anoon he wolde preyen hir to swere
What was that word, or make him evel apayd;
Than wende she out of hir wit have brayd;
But al this nas but sleight and flaterye,
Withouten love he feyned jelosye.

And al this took she so debonerly,
That al his wille, hir thoghte hit skilful thing,
And ever the lenger loved him tenderly,
And did him honour as he were a king.
Hir herte was wedded to him with a ring;
So ferforth upon trouthe is hir entente,
That wher he goth, hir herte with him wente.

Whan she shal etc, on him is so hir thought,
That wel unnethe of mete took she keep;
And whan that she was to hir reste broght,
On him she thoghte alwey til that she sleep;
Whan he was absent, prevely she weep;
Thus liveth fair Anelida the quene
for fals Arcite, that did hir al this tene.

Anelida &
Arcite

This fals Arcite, of his new fangellesse,
for she to him so lowly was and trewe,
Took lesse deyntee for hir stedfastnesse,
And saw another lady, proud and newe,
And right anon he cladde him in hir hewe,
Wot I not whether in whyte, rede, or grene,
And falsed fair Anelida the quene.

But nevertheles, gret wonder was hit noon
Thogh he wer fals, for hit is kinde of man,
Sith Lamek was, that is so longe agoon,
To been in love as fals as ever he can;
He was the firste fader that began
To loven two, and was in bigamy;
And he found tentes first, but if men lye.

This fals Arcite sumwhat moste he feyne,
Whan he wex fals, to covere his traitorye,
Right as an hors, that can both byte and pleyne;
for he bar hir on honde of trecherye,
And swoor he coude hir doublesse espye,
And al was falsnes that she to him mente;
Thus swoor this thief, & forth his way he wente.

Alas! what herte might endure hit,
for routhe or wo, hir sorow for to telle?
Or what man hath the cunning or the wit?
Or what man might within the chambre dwelle,
If I to him rehersen shal the helle,
That suffreth fair Anelida the quene
for fals Arcite, that did hir al this tene?

She wepeth, waileth, swowneth pitously,
To grounde deed she falleth as a stoon;
Al crampissheth hir limes cokedly,
She speket as hir wit were al agoon;
Other colour then ashen hath she noon,
Noon other word she speket moche or lyte,
But Mercy, cruel herte myn, Arcite!

And thus endureth, til that she was so mate
That she ne hath foot on which she may sustene;
But forth languissching ever in this estate,
Of which Arcite hath nother routhe ne tene;
His herte was elleswhere, newe and grene,
That on hir wo ne deynteth him not to thinke,
him rekketh never wher she flete or sinke.

His newe lady holdeth him so narowe
Up by the brydel, at the staves ende,
That every word, he dradde hit as an arowe;
hir daunger made him bothe bowe and bende,
And as hir liste, made him turne or wende;
for she ne graunted him in hir livinge
No grace, why that he hath lust to singe;

But drof him forth, unneth liste hir knowe
That he was servaunt to hir ladyshippe,
But lest that he wer proude, she held him lowe;
Thus serveth he, withouten fee or shipe,
She sent him now to londe, now to shippe;
And for she yaf him daunger al his fille,
Therfor she had him at hir owne wille.

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Ensampler of this, ye thrifty wimmen alle,
Take here Anelida and fals Arcite,
That for hir liste him Dere herte calle,
And was so meek, therfor he loved hir lyte;
The kinde of mannes herte is to delyte
In thing that straunge is, also God me save!
for what he may not gete, that wolde he have.

Now turne we to Anelida ageyn,
That pyneth day by day in languissching;
But whan she saw that hir ne gat no geyn,
Upon a day, ful sorowfully weping,
She caste hir for to make a compleyning,
And with hir owne honde she gan hit wryte;
And sente hit to hir Theban knight Arcite.

The Compleynt of Anelida the Quene upon fals
Arcite.
Proem.

SO thirleth with the point
of remembrance,
The swerd of sorowe,
ywhet with fals plesaunce,
Myn herte, bare of blis and
blak of hewe,
That turned is in quaking
at my daunce,
My suretee in a whaped
countenaunce;
Sith hit availleth not for to ben trewe;
for whoso trewest is, hit shal hir rewe,
That serveth love and doth hir observaunce
Alwey to oon, and chaungeth for no newe.

IWOT myself as wel as any wight;
for I loved oon with al my herte and
might
More then myself, an hundred
thousand sythe,
And called him my hertes lyf, my
knight,
And was al his, as fer as hit was right;
And whan that he was glad, than was I blythe,
And his disese was my deeth as swythe;
And he ayein his trouthe me had plight
for evermore, his lady me to kythe.

NOw is he fals, alas! and causeles,
And of my wo he is so routheles,
That with a worde him list not ones deyme
To bring ayein my sorowful herte in pees,
for he is caught up in another lees.
Right as him list, he laugheth at my peyne,
And I ne can myn herte not restreyne,
That I ne love him alwey, nevertheles;
And of al this I not to whom me pleyne.

AND shal I pleyne ... alas! the harde
stounde...
Unto my foo that yaf my herte a wounde,
And yet desyreth that myn harm be more?
Nay, certes! ferther wol I never founde
Non other help, my sores for to sounde.

My desteney hath shapen it ful yore;
I wil non other medecyne ne lore;
I wil ben ay ther I was ones bounde,
That I have seid, be seid for evermore!

ALAS! wher is become your gentillesse!
Your wordes ful of plesaunce and
humblesse?
Your observaunces in so low manere,
And your awayting and your besinesse
Upon me, that ye calden your maistresse,
Your sovereyn lady in this worlde here?
Alas! and is ther nother word ne chere
Ye vouchesauf upon myn hevinesse?
Alas! your love, I bye hit al to dere.

OW certes, swete, thogh that ye
Thus causeles the cause be
Of my dedly adversitee,
Your manly reson oughte it to respyte
To slee your frend, and namely me,
That never yet in no degree
Offended yow, as wisly he,
That al wot, out of wo my soule quyte!

AL for I shewed yow,
Arcite,
Al that men wolde to me
wryte,
And was so besy, yow to
delyte...
My honour save... meke,
kinde, and free,
Therfor ye putte on me the
wyte,
And of me recche not a myte,
Thogh that the swerd of sorow byte
My woful herte through your crueltee.

NY swete foo, why do ye so, for shame?
And thenke ye that furthered be your
name,
To love a newe, and been untrewed? nay!
And putte yow in sclander now and blame,
And do to me adversitee and grame,
That love yow most, God, wel thou wost!
alway?
Yet turn ayein, and be al pleyn som day,
And than shal this that now is mis be game,
And al foryive, why! that I live may.

AL herte myn, al this is for
to seyne,
As whether shal I preye or
elles pleyne?
Whiche is the way to doon
yow to be trewe?
for either mot I have yow
in my cheyne,
Or with the dethe ye mot
departe us tweyne;
Cher ben non other mene weyes newe;
for God so wisly on my soule rewe,

As verily ye sleen me with the peyne;
That may ye see unfeyned of myn hewe.

Anelida &
Arcite

FOR thus ferforth have I my deth ysoght,
Myself I mordre with my prevy thoght;
for sorow and routhe of your unkinde-
nesse
I wepe, I wake, I faste; al helpeth noght;
I weyve joy that is to speke of oght,
I voyde companye, I flee gladnesse;
Who may avaunte hir bet of hevinesse
Then I? and to this plyte have ye me broght,
Withoute gilt; me nedeth no witness.

AND sholde I preye, and weyve woman-
hede?
Nay! rather deth then do so foul a dede,
And axe mercy gilleles! what nede?
And if I pleyne what lyf that I lede,
Yow rekketh not; that know I, out of drede;
And if I unto yow myn othes bede
for myn excuse, a scorn shal be my mede;
Your chere floureth, but hit wol not seide;
ful longe agoon I oughte have take hede.

FOR thogh I hadde yow tomorow ageyn,
I might as wel holde Averill fro reyn,
As holde yow, to make yow stedfast.
Almighty god, of trouthe sovereyn,
Wher is the trouthe of man? who hath hit
sleyn?
Who that hem loveth shal hem fynde as fast
As in a tempest is a roten mast.
Is that a tame best that is ay feyn
To renne away, when he is leest agast?

NOw mercy, swete, if I misseye,
Have I seyde oght amis, I preye?
I not; my wit is al aweye.
I fare as doth the song of Chauntepleure.
for now I pleyne, and now I pleye,
I am so mased that I deye,
Arcite hath born away the keye
Of al my worlde, and my good aventure!

FOR in this worlde nis creature
Wakinge, in more discomfiture
Then I, ne more sorow endure;
And if I stepe a furlong wey or tweye,
Than thinketh me, that your figure
Before me stant, clad in asure,
To profren eft a newe assure
for to be trewe, and mercy me to preye.

THE longe night this wonder sight I drye,
And on the day for this a fray I dye,
And of al this right noght, ywis, ye recche.
Ne never mo myn yen two be drye,
And to your routhe and to your trouthe I crye.
But welaway! to fer be they to fecche;
Thus holdeth me my destinee a wrecche.
But me to rede out of this drede or gye
Ne may my wit, so weyk is hit, not strecche.

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AN ende I thus, sith I
may do no more,
I yee hit up for now and
evermore;
For I shal never eft putten
in balaunce
My sekernes, ne lerne of
love the lore.
But as the swan, I have
herd seyde ful yore,
So singe I here my destiny or chaunce,
How that Arcite Anelida so sore
Hath thirled with the poynt of remembrance!

WHAN that Anelida this woful
quene
Hath of hir hande writen in this
wyse,
With face deed, betwixe pale and
grene,
She fel a swowe; and sith ye gan to ryse,
And unto Mars avoweth sacrifice
Within the temple, with a sorowful chere,
That shapen was as ye shal after here.

Unfinished.

CHAUCCERS WORDES UNTO ADAM, HIS
OWNE SCRIVEYN

ADAM scriveyn, if ever it thee
bifalle
Boece or Troilus to wryten
newe,
Under thy lokkes thou
most have the scalles,
But after my making thou
wryte trewe.
So ofte a daye I mot thy
werk renewe,
Hit to correcte and eek to rubbe and scrape;
And al is through thy negligence and rape.

THE FORMER AGE

BLISFUL tyf, a paisible
and a swete
Leden the peples in the
former age;
They helde hem payed of
frutes, that they ete,
Which that the feldes yave
hem by usage;
They ne were nat forpam-
pred with outrage;
Unknowen was the quern and eek the melle;
They eten mast, hawes, and swich pounage,
And dronken water of the colde welle.

Yit nas the ground nat wounded with the
plough,
But corn upsprong, unsowe of mannes
hond,

The which they gniden, and eete nat half
ynough.
No man yit knew the forwes of his lond;
No man the fyr out of the flint yit fond;
Ankorven and ungrobbed lay the vyne;
No man yit in the mortar spyces grond
To clarre, ne to sause of galauntyn.

No mader, welde, or wood no listere
Ne knew; the flees was of his former hewe;
No flesh ne wiste offence of egge or spere;
No coyn ne knew man which was fals or trewe;
No ship yit karf the waves grene and blew;
No marchaunt yit ne fette outlandish ware;
No trompes for the werres folk ne knewe,
No toures heye, and walles rounde or square.

What sholde it han awayled to werreye?
Ther lay no profit, ther was no richesse,
But cursed was the tyme, I dar wel seye,
That men first dide hir swety bysynesse
To grobbe up metal, lurking in darknesse,
And in the riveres first gemmes soghte.
Alas! than sprong up al the cursednesse
Of covetyse, that first our sorwe broghte!

Thise tyraunts putte hem gladly nat in pres,
No wildnesse, ne no busshes for to winne
Ther povertie is, as seith Diogenes,
Ther as vitale is eek so skars and thinne
That noght but mast or apples is therinne.
But, ther as bagges been and fat vitaille,
Ther wol they gon, and spare for no sinne
With al hir ost the cite for tassaile.

Yit were no paleis/chaumbres, ne non halles;
In caves and in wodes softe and swete
Slepten this blisful folk withoute walles,
On gras or leves in parfit quiete.
No doun of fetheres, ne no bleched shete
Was hid to hem, but in seurtee they slepte;
Hir hertes were al oon, withoute galles,
Everich of hem his feith to other kepte.

Unforged was the hauberk and the plate;
The lambish peple, voyd of alle vyce,
Hadden no fantasie to debate,
But ech of hem wolde other wel cheryce;
No pryde, non envye, non avaryce,
No lord, no taylage by no tyrannye;
Humblesse and pees, good feith, the emperice,
Fulfilled erthe of olde curtesye.

Yit was not Jupiter the likerous,
That first was fader of delicacye,
Come in this world; ne Nembrot, desirous
To reynen, had nat maad his toures hye.
Alas, alas! now may men wepe and crye!
For in our dayes nis but covetyse
And doublenesse, and tresoun and envye,
Poyssoun, manslaughtre, and mordre in sondry
wyse.

finit Etas prima. Chaucers.

BALADE DE BON CONSEYL

LEE fro the pries, and
dwelle with sothfastnesse,
Suffyce unto thy good,
though hit be smal;
for hord hath hate, and
climbing tikellesse,
Pries hath envye, and wele
blent overal;
Savour no more than thee
bihove shal;
Werk wel thyself, that other folk canst rede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

Tempest thee noght al croked to redresse,
In trust of hir that turneth as a bal:
Gret reste stant in litel besynesse;
And eek be war to sporne ageyn an al;
Stryve noght, as doth the crokke with the wal.
Daunte thyself, that dauntest othres dede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,
The wastling for this worlde axeth a fal.
Her nis non hoom, her nis but wildernesse:
forth, pilgrim, forth! forth, beste, out of thy
stall!
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;
Holde the hye wey, and lat thy goost thee lede:
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

Envoy.

THEREFORE, thou vache, leve thyn
old wretchednesse
Unto the worlde; leve now to be thral;
Crye him mercy, that of his hy
goodnesse
Made thee of noght, and in especial
Draw unto him, and pray in general
for thee, and eek for othre, hevenlich mede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

Explicit Le bon conseil de G. Chaucer.

TO ROSEMOUNDE. A BALADE

ADAME, ye ben of al beaute
shryne
As fer as cerclid is the
mappemounde;
for as the cristal glorious
ye shyne,
And lyke ruby ben your
chekes rounde.
Therwith ye ben so mery
and so jocounde,
That at a revel whan that I see you daunce,
It is an oynement unto my wounde,
Thogh ye to me ne do no daliaunce.

for thogh I wepe of teres ful a tyne,
Yet may that wo myn herte nat confounde;
Your seemly voys that ye so smal outtwyne
Maketh my thought in joye and blis habounde.
So curteisly I go, with love bounde,

That to myself I sey, in my penaunce,
Suffyseth me to love you, Rosemounde,
Thogh ye to me ne do no daliaunce.

Nas never pyk walwed in galauntyn
As I in love am walwed and ywounde;
for which ful ofte I of myself divyne
That I am trewe Tristram the secounde.
My love may not refreyd be nor afounde;
I brenne ay in an amorous plesaunce.
Do what you list, I wil your thral be founde,
Thogh ye to me ne do no daliaunce.

Tregentil. Chaucer.

PROVERBE OF CHAUCER

WHAT shul thise clothes
manifold,
Lo! this hote somers
day?...
After greet heet cometh
cold;
No man caste his pilche
away.
Of al this world the wyde
compas
Hit wol not in myn armes tweyne. ...
Whoso mochel wol embrace
Litel therof he shal distreyne.

LENVOY DE CHAUCER A SCOGAN

OBROKEN been the
statuts hye in hevene
That creat were eternally to
dure,
Sith that I see the brighte
goddess sevene
Mow wepe and wayle, and
passioun endure,
As may in erthe a mortal
creature.
Alas, fro whennes may this thing procede?
Of whiche errour I deye almost for drede.

By worde eterne whylom was hit shape
That fro the fyfte cerle, in no manere,
Ne mighte a drope of teres doun escape.
But now so wepeth Venus in hir spere,
That with hir teres she wol drenche us here.
Alas, Scogan! this is for thyn offence!
Thou causest this deluge of pestilence.

Hast thou not seyde, in blasphemie of this goddess,
Through pryde, or through thy grete rakelnesse,
Swich thing as in the lawe of love forbode is?
That, for thy lady saw nat thy distresse,
Therfor thou yave hir up at Michelmesse!
Alas, Scogan! of olde folk ne yonge
Was never erst Scogan blamed for his tonge!

Thou drowe in scorn Cupyde eek to record
Of thilke rebel word that thou hast spoken,
for which he wol no lenger be thy lord.
And, Scogan, thogh his bowe be nat broken,

Envoye
Chaucer a
Scogan

He wol nat with his arwes been ywroken
On thee, ne me, ne noon of our figure;
We shul of him have neyther hurt ne cure.

Now certes, frend, I drede of thyn unhappe,
Lest for thy gilt the wreche of Love procede
On alle hem that ben hore and rounde of shape,
That ben so lykly folk in love to spede.
Than shul we for our labour han no mede;
But wel I wot, thou wilt answer and seye:
Lo! olde Grisel list to ryme and pleye!

Nay, Scogan, sey not so, for I meexcuse,
God help me so! in no rym, doutelees,
Ne thinke I never of slepe wak my muse,
That rusteth in my shethe stille in pees.
Whyl I was yong, I putte hir forth in pees,
But al shal passe that men prose or ryme;
Take every man his turn, as for his tyme.

Envoy.

COGAN, that knelest at the stremes
heed
Of grace, of alle honour & worthinesse,
In thende of which strene I am dul
as deed,

Forgete in solitarie wilderness;
Yet, Scogan, thenke on Tullius kindenesse,
Minne thy frend, ther it may fructifye!
farwel, and lok thou never eft Love defy!

LENVOY DE CHAUCER A BUKTON.
The conseil of Chaucer touching Mariage, which
was sent to Bukton.

MY maister Bukton, whan of
Criste our kinge
Was axed, what is trouthe
or sothfastnesse,
He nat a word answerde to
that axinge,
As who saith: No man is at
trewe, I gesse.
And therfor, thogh I
highte to expresse

The sorwe and wo that is in mariage,
I dar not wryte of hit no wikkednesse,
Lest I myself falle eft in swich dotage.

I wol nat seyn, how that hit is the cheyne
Of Sathanas, on which he gnaweth ever,
But I dar seyn, were he out of his peyne,
As by his wille, he wolde be bounde never.
But thilke doted fool that eft hath lever
Ycheyned be than out of prisoun crepe,
God lete him never fro his wo discever,
Ne no man him bewaile, though he wepe.

But yit, lest thou do worse, tak a wyf;
Bet is to wedde, than brenne in worse wyse.
But thou shalt have sorwe on thy flesh, thy lyf,
And been thy wyves thral, as seyn these wyse,
And if that holy writ may nat suffise,
Experience shal thee teche, so may happe,
That thee were lever to be take in fryse
Than eft to falle of wedding in the trappe.

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Envoy.

HIS litel writ, proverbes, or figure
I sende you, tak kepe of hit, I rede;
Anwys is he that can no wele endure.
If thou be siker, put thee nat indrede.
The Wyf of Bathe I pray you that
ye rede

Of this matere that we have on honde.
God graunte you your lyf frely to lede
In fredom; for ful harde is to be bonde.

Explicit.

GENTILESSE. MORAL BALADE OF
CHAUCER.

HE firste stok, fader of
gentilesse...
What man that claymeth
gentil for to be,
Must folowe his trace, and
alle his wittes dresse
Vertu to sewe, and vyces
for to flee.

for unto vertu longeth
dignitee,
And noght the revers, sauflly dar I deme,
Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe.

This firste stok was ful of rightwisnesse,
Trewe of his word, sobre, pitous, and free,
Clene of his goste, and loved besinesse,
Ageinst the vyce of slouth, in honestee;
And, but his heir love vertu, as dide he,
He is noght gentil, thogh he riche seme,
Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe.

Vyce may wel be heir to old richesse;
But ther may no man, as men may wel see,
Bequethe his heir his vertuous noblesse;
That is appropred unto no degree,
But to the firste fader in magestee,
That maketh him his heir, that can him queme,
Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe.

LAK OF STEDFASTNESSE. BALADE.

SOM tyme this world was so
stedfast and stable
That mannes word was
obligacioun,
And now hit is so fale and
deceivable,
That word and deed, as in
conclusioun,
Ben nothing lyk, for turned
up so down

Is at this world for mede and wilfulnessse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse.

What maketh this world to be so variable
But lust that folk have in dissensioun?
Among us now a man is holde unable,
But if he can, by som collusioun,
Don his neighbour wrong or oppressioun.
What causeth this, but wilful wretchednesse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse?

Trouthe is put down, resoun is holden fable;
Vertu hath now no dominacioun,
Pitee exyled, no man is merciable,
Through covetyse is blent discrecioun;
The world hath mad a permutacioun,
fro right to wrong, fro trouthe to fikelnesse,
That al is lost, for lak of stedfastnesse.

Envoy to King Richard.

O PRINCE, desyre to be honourable,
Cherish thy folk and hate ex-
torcioun!
Suffre no thing, that may be
reprevable
To thyn estat, don in thy regioun.
Shew forth thy swerd of castigacioun,
Dred God, do law, love trouthe and worthinesse,
And wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse.

Explicit.

BALADES DE VISAGE SANZ PEINTURE.
Le Pleintif cointre fortune.

MIS wrecched worldes
transmutacioun,
As wele or wo, now povre
and now honour,
Withouthen ordre or wys
discrecioun
Governed is by fortunes
errour;
But natheles, the lak of hir
favour

Ne may nat don me singen, though I dye,
Jay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour:
for fynally, fortune, I thee defy!

Yit is me left the light of my resoun,
To knowen frend fro fo in thy mirour.
So muche hath yit thy whirling up and down
Ytaught me for to knowen in an hour.
But trewely, no force of thy reddour
To him that over himself hath the maystrye!
My suffisaunce shal be my socour:
for fynally, fortune, I thee defy!

O Socrates, thou stedfast champioun,
She never mighte be thy tormentour;
Thou never dreddest hir oppressioun,
Ne in hir chere founde thou no savour.
Thou knewe wel deceit of hir colour,
And that hir moste worshippe is to lye.
I knowe hir eek a fals dissimulour:
for fynally, fortune, I thee defy!

La respounse de fortune au Pleintif.

O man is wrecched, but himself hit
wene,
And he that hath himself hath
suffisaunce.
Why seystow thanne I am to thee
so kene,
That hast thyself out of my governaunce?
Seyst thus: Graunt mercy of thyn haboundaunce

That thou hast lent or this. Why wolt thou stryve?
What wostow yit, how I thee wol avaunce?
And eek thou hast thy beste frend alyve!

I have thee taught divisioun bitwene
frend of effect, and frend of countenaunce;
Thee nedeth nat the galle of noon hyene,
That cureth eyen derke fro hir penaunce;
Now seestow cleer, that were in ignoraunce.
Yit halt thyn ancre, and yit thou mayst arryve
Ther bountee berth the keye of my substaunce:
And eek thou hast thy beste frend alyve.

How many have I refused to sustene,
Sin I thee fostred have in thy plesaunce!
Woltow than make a statut on thy quene
That I shal been ay at thyn ordinaunce?
Thou born art in my regne of variaunce,
Aboute the wheel with other most thou dryve.
My lore is bet than wikke is thy grevaunce,
And eek thou hast thy beste frend alyve.

La respounse du Pleintif cointre fortune.

MY lore I dampne, hit is adversitee.
My frend maystow nat reven, blind
goddesse!
That I thy frendes knowe, I thanke
hit thee.
Tak hem agayn, lat hem go lye on
presse!

The negardye in keping hir richesse
Prenostik is thou wolt hir tour assaile;
Wikke appetyt comth ay before seknesse:
In general, this reule may nat fayle.

La respounse de fortune cointre le Pleintif.

HOU pinchest at my mutabilitee,
for I thee lente a drope of my
richesse,
And now me lyketh to withdrawe me.
Why sholdestow my realtee
oppresser?
The see may ebbe and flowen more or lesse;
The welkne hath might to shyne, reyne, or hayle;
Right so mot I kythen my brotelnesse.
In general, this reule may nat fayle.

Lo, thexecucion of the magestee
That al purveyeth of his rightwisnesse,
That same thing fortune clepen ye,
Ye blinde bestes, ful of lewednesse!
The hevene hath propretee of sikernesse,
This world hath ever resteles travayle;
Thy laste day is ende of myn intresse:
In general, this reule may nat fayle.

Envoy de fortune.

PRINCES, I prey you of your
gentilesse,
Lat nat this man on me thus crye
and pleyne,
And I shal quyte you your bisinesse
At my requeste, as three of you or
tweyne;

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Balades
de Visage
sanz
Peinture

And, but you list releve him of his peyne,
Preyeth his beste frend, of his noblesse,
That to som beter estat he may atteyne.
Explicit.

THE COMPLEINT OF CHAUCER TO HIS
EMPTY PURSE.



O you, my purse, & to non
other wight
Compleyne I, for ye be my
lady dere!
I am so sory, now that ye be
light;
for certes, but ye make me
hevy chere,
Me were as leef beleyd upon
my bere;
for whiche unto your mercy thus I crye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Now voucheth sauf this day, or hit be night,
That I of you the blisful soun may here,
Or see your colour lyk the sonne bright,
That of yelownesse hadde never pere.
Ye be my lyf, ye be myn hertes sterc,
Quene of comfort and of good companye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Now purs, that be to me my lyves light,
And saveour, as down in this worlde here,
Out of this toun help me through your might,
Sin that ye wole nat been my tresore;
for I am shave as nye as any frere.
But yit I pray unto your curtesye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Lenvoy de Chaucer.

CONQUEROUR of Brutes
Albioun!
Which that by lyne and free
eleccioun
Ben verray king, this song to you
I sende;

And ye, that mowen al our harm amende,
Have minde upon my supplicacioun!

MERCILES BEHUTE: A TRIPLE
ROUNDEL.



OUR yēn two wol slee me sodenly,
I may the beauté of hem not
sustene,
So woundeth hit throughout
my herte kene.
And but your word wol helen
hastily
My hertes wounde, whyl that
hit is grene,
Your yēn two wol slee me sodenly,
I may the beauté of hem not sustene.

Upon my trouthe I sey yow feithfully,
That ye ben of my lyf and deeth the quene;
for with my deeth the trouthe shal be sene.

Your yēn two wol slee me sodenly,
I may the beauté of hem not sustene,
So woundeth hit throughout my herte kene.

SO hath youre beauté fro your herte chased
Pitee, that me ne availeth not to pleyne;
for Daunger halt your mercy in his cheyne;
Gittles my deeth thus han ye me purchaced;
I sey yow sooth, me nedeth not to feyne;
So hath your beauté fro your herte chased
Pitee, that me ne availeth not to pleyne.

Allas! that nature hath in yow compassed
So greet beauté, that no man may atteyne
To mercy, though he sterve for the peyne.
So hath your beauté fro your herte chased
Pitee, that me ne availeth not to pleyne;
for Daunger halt your mercy in his cheyne.

SIN I fro Love escaped am so fat,
I never thenk to ben in his prison lene;
Sin I am free, I counte him not a bene.

He may answer, and seye this or that;
I do no fors, I speke right as I mene.
Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat,
I never thenk to ben in his prison lene.

Love hath my name ystrike out of his scat,
And he is strike out of my bokes clene
for evermo; ther is non other mene.
Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat,
I never thenk to ben in his prison lene;
Sin I am free, I counte him not a bene.
Explicit.

A COMPLEINT TO HIS LADY.

I.



HE longe night, whan every
creature
Shulde have hir rest in som
what, as by kinde,
Or elles ne may hir lyf nat
long endure,
Hit falleth most into my
woful minde
How I so fer have broght
myself behinde,
That, sauf the deeth, ther may nothing me lisse.
So desespaiied I am from alle blisse.

This same thocht me lasteth til the morwe,
And from the morwe forth til hit be eve;
Ther nedeth me no care for to borwe,
for bothe I have good leyser and good leve;
Ther is no wight that wol me wo bereve
To wepe ynogh, and wailen al my fille;
The sore spark of peyne doth me spille.

II.

The sore spark of peyne doth me spille;
This Love hath eek me set in swich a place
That my desyr he never wol fulfille;
for neither pitee, mercy, neither grace

Can I nat finde; and fro my sorwful herte,
for to be deed, I can hit nat arace.
The more I love, the more she doth me smerte;
Through which I see, withoute remedye,
That from the deeth I may no wyse asterte;
for this day in hir servise shal I dye.

III.
Thus am I slain, with sorwes ful dyverse;
ful longe agoon I oghte have taken hede.
Now sothly, what she hight I wol reherse;
hir name is Bountee, set in womanhede,
Sadnesse in youthe, and Beautee prydelees,
And Plesaunce, under governaunce and drede;
hir surname eek is faire Rewthelees,
The Wyse, yknit unto Good Aventure,
That, for I love hir, sleeth me gyltelees.
hir love I best, and shal, whyl I may dure,
Bet than myself an hundred thousand deel.
Than al this worldes richesse or creature.
Now hath nat Love me bestowed weel
To love, ther I never shal have part?
Allas! right thus is turned me the wheel,
Thus am I slayn with loves fryr dart.
I can but love hir best, my swete fo;
Love hath me taught no more of his art
But serve alwey, and stinte for no wo.

IV.

Within my trewe careful herte ther is
so moche wo, and eek so litel blis,
That wo is me that ever I was bore;
for al that thing which I desyre I mis,
And al that ever I wolde nat, I wis,
That finde I redy to me evermore;
And of al this I not to whom me pleyne.
for she that mighte me out of this bringe
Nerecheth nat whether I wepe or singe;
So litel rewthe hath she upon my peyne.

Allas! whan sleping time is, than I wake,
Whan I shulde daunce, for fere than I quake;
Yow rekketh never wher I flete or sinke;
This hevy lyf I lede for your sake,
Thogh ye therof in no wyse hede take,
for on my wo yow deyneth not to thinke.
My hertes lady, and hool my lyves quene!
for trewly dorste I seye, as that I fele,
Me semeth that your swete herte of stele
Is whetted now ageynes me to kene.

My dere herte, and best beloved fo,
Why lyketh yow to do me al this wo,
What have I doon that greveth yow, or sayd,
But for I serve and love yow and no mo?
And whylst I live, I wol do ever so;
And therfor, swete, ne beth nat evil apayd.
for so good and so fair as that ye be,
Hit were a right gret wonder but ye hadde
Of alle servants, bothe goode and badde;
And leest worthy of alle hem, I am he.

But nevertheless, my righte lady swete,

Thogh that I be unconning and unmete
To serve as I best coude ay your hynesse,
Yit is ther fayner noon, that wolde I hete,
Than I, to do yow ese, or elles bete
Whatso I wiste were to yow distresse.
And hadde I might as good as I have wille,
Than shulde ye fele wher it wer so or noon;
for in this worlde living is ther noon
That fayner wolde your hertes wil fulfille.

for bothe I love, and eek dreed yow so sore,
And algates moot, and have doon yow, ful
yore,
That bet loved is noon, ne never shal;
And yit I wolde beseche yow of no more
But leveth wel, and be nat wrooth therfore,
And lat me serve yow forth; lo! this is al.
for I am nat so hardy ne so wood
for to desire that ye shulde love me;
for wel I wot, alas! that may nat be;
I am so litel worthy, and ye so good.

for ye be on the worthiest on lyve,
And I the most unlykly for to thryve;
Yit, for al this, now witeth ye right wele,
That ye ne shul me from your service dryve
That I nil ay, with alle my wittes fyve,
Serve yow trewly, what wo so that I fele.
for I am set on yow in swich manere
That, thogh ye never wil upon me rewe,
I moste yow love, and ever been as trewe
As any can or may on lyve here.

The more that I love yow, goodly free,
The lasse fynde I that ye loven me;
Allas! whan shal that harde wit amende?
Wher is now al your wommanly pitee,
Your gentillesse and your debonaitee,
Wit ye nothing therof upon me spende?
And so hool, swete, as I am youre al,
And so gret wil as I have yow to serve,
Now, certes, and ye lete me thus sterve,
Yit have ye wonne theron but a smal.

for, at my knowing, I do nothing why,
And this I wol beseche yow hertely,
That, ther ever ye finde, whyl ye live,
A trewer servant to yow than am I,
Leveth me thanne, and sleeth me hardely,
And I my deeth to you wol al forgive.
And if ye finde no trewer man than me,
Why will ye suffre than that I thus spille,
And for no maner gilt but my good wille?
As good wer thanne untrew as trewe to be.

But I, my lyf and deeth, to yow obeye,
And with right buxom herte hoolly I preye,
As is your moste plesure, so doth by me;
Wel lever is me lyken yow and deye
Than for to any thing or thinke or seye
That mighte yow offende in any tyme.
And therfor, swete, rewe on my peynes
smerte,



And of your grace granteth me som drope;
for elles may me laste ne blis ne hope,
Ne dwellen in my trouble careful herte.

WOMANLY NOBLESSE.
Ballade that Chaucer made.

Wo hath my herte caught
in remembrance
Your beaute hool, and
stedfast governaunce,
Your vertues alle, and
your hy noblesse,
That you to serve is set
at my plesaunce;
So wel me lykth your
womanly contenaunce,
Your fresshe fetures and your comlinesse,
That, whyl I live, my herte to his maistresse,
You hath ful chose, in trew perserveraunce,
Never to chaunge, for no maner distresse.

And sith I you shal do this observaunce
At my lyf, withouten displesaunce,
You for to serve with al my besinesse,
Taketh me, lady, in your obeisaunce,

And have me somewhat in your souvenaunce.
My woful herte suffreth greet duresse;
And loke how humbly, with al simpleesse,
My wil I conforme to your ordenaunce,
As you best list, my peynes to redresse.

Considring eek how I hange in balaunce
In your servyse; swich, lo! is my chaunce,
Abyding grace, whan that your gentillesse
Of my gret wo list doon allegaunce,
And with your pite me som wyse avaunce,
In ful rebating of my hevinesse;
And thinkth, by reson, wommanly noblesse
Shuld nat desyre for to doon outrance
Theras she findeth noon unbuxumnesse.

Lenvoye.

ACTOUR of norture, lady of
pleasaunce,
Sovereine of beaute, flour of
wommanhede,
Take ye non hede unto myn
ignoraunce,

But this receyveth of your goodlihede,
Thinking that I have caught in remembrance
Your beaute hool, your stedfast governaunce.

HEERE BIGYNNECH THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE



But undoth us the avisoun
That whylom mette king Cipoun.
And whoso sayth, or weneth it be
A jape, or elles a nycetee
To wene that dremes after falle,
Let whoso liste a fool me calle,
for this trowe I, and say for me,
That dremes signifaunce be
Of good and harme to many wightes,
That dremen in her slepe anightes
ful many thinges covertly,
That fallen after al openly.

IN my twenty yere of age,
Whan that Love taketh his
corage
Of yonge folk, I wente sone
To bedde, as I was wont to done,
And fast I sleep; and in sleping,

Me mette swiche a swevening,
That lykede me wonders wel;
But in that sweven is never a del
That it nis afterward befallle,
Right as this dreem wol telle us alle.
Now this dreem wol I ryme aright,
To make your hertes gaye and light;
for Love it prayeth, and also

MEN SEYN THAT IN SWEVENINGES
Ther nis but fables and lesinges;
But men may somme swevenes seen,
Which hardely ne false been,
But afterward ben apparaunte.
This may I drawe to waraunte
An authour, that hight Macrobes,
That halt not dremes false ne lees,

Commaundeth me that it be so
And if ther any aske me,
Whether that it be he or she,
How that this book the which is here
Shal hote, that I rede you here;
It is the Romance of the Rose,
In which al the art of love I close.
The mater fair is of to make;
God graunte in gree that she it take
For whom that it begonnen is!
And that is she that hath, ywis,
So mochel prys; and therto she
So worthy is biloved be,
That she wel oughte, of prys and right,
Be cleped Rose of every wight.

GHT it was May me thoughte tho,
It is fyve yere or more ago;
That it was May, thus dremed me,
In tyme of love and jolitee,
That al thing ginneth waxen gay,
For ther is neither busk nor hay

In May, that it nil shrouded been,
And it with newe leves wreen.
These wodes eek recoveren grene,
That drye in winter been to sene;
And the erthe wexeth proud withalle,
For swote dewes that on it falle,
And al the pore estat forget
In which that winter hadde it set,
And than bicometh the ground so proud
That it wol have a newe shroud,
And maketh so queynt his robe and fayr
That it hath hewes an hundred payr
Of gras and floures, inde and pers,
And many hewes ful dyvers:
That is the robe I mene, ywis,
Through which the ground to preisen is.

THE briddes, that han left hir song,
Whyl they han suffred cold so strong
In wedres grille, and derk to sighte,
Ben in May, for the sonne brighte,
So glade, that they shewe in singing,
That in hir herte is swich lyking,
That they mote singen and be light.
Than doth the nightingale hir might
To make noyse, and syngen blythe.
Than is blisful, many a sythe,
The chelaundre and the papingay.
Than yonge folk entenden ay
For to ben gay and amorous,
The tyme is than so savourous.
Hard is his herte that loveth nought
In May, whan al this mirth is wrought;
Whan he may on these braunches here
The smale briddes singen clere
Hir blisful swete song pitous;
And in this sesoun delytous,
Whan love affrayeth alle thing,
Me thoughte anight, in my sleping,
Right in my bed, ful redily,
That it was by the morowe ertly,
And up I roos, and gan me clothe;
Anoon I wissh myn hondes bothe;
A sylvre needle forth I drogh

Out of an aguiler queynt ynogh,
And gan this needle threde anon;
For out of toun me list to gon
The sowne of briddes for to here,
That on thise bussches singen clere.
And in the swete sesoun that leef is,
With a threde basting my slevis,
Aloon I wente in my playing,
The smale foules song harkning;
That peyned hem ful many a payre
To singe on bowes bloomed fayre.
Jolif and gay, ful of gladnesse,
Toward a river I gan me dresse,
That I herde renne faste by;
For fairer playing non saugh I
Than playen me by that riveer,
For from an hille that stood ther neer
Cam down the streem ful stif and bold.
Cleer was the water, and as cold
As any welle is, sooth to seyne;
And somdel lasse it was than Seine,
But it was straighter wel away,
And never saugh I, er that day,
The water that so wel lyked me;
And wonder glad was I to see
That lusty place, and that riveer;
And with that water that ran so cleer
My face I wissh. Tho saugh I wel
The botme paved everydel
With gravel, ful of stones shene.
The medewe softe, swote, and grene,
Beet right on the watersyde.
ful cleer was than the morowtyde,
And ful attempre, out of drede,
Tho gan I walke through the mede,
Downward ay in my playing,
The riversyde costeyng.

AN whan I had a whylle
goon,
I saugh a Gardin right
anoon,
ful long and brood, and
everydel
Enclos it was, and walled
wel,
With hye walles enbat-
ailed,

Portrayed without, and wel entailed
With many riche portraitures;
And bothe images and peyntures
Gan I biholde bisily.
And I wol telle you, redily,
Of thilke images the semblaunce,
As fer as I have remembrance.

AMIDDE saugh I hate stonde,
That for hir wrathe, ire, and onde,
Semed to been a moveresse,
An angry wight, a chideresse;
And ful of gyle, and fel corage,
By semblaunt was that ilke image.
And she was nothing wel arrayed,
But lyk a wood womman afrayed;
Yfrounced foule was hir visage,
And grenning for dispitous rage;



Hir nose snorted up for tene.
ful hidous was she for to sene,
ful foul and rusty was she, this.
Hir heed ywriten was, ywis,
ful grimly with a greet towayle.

AN image of another entayle, **felonye**
A lift half, was hir faste by;
Hir name above hir heed saugh I,
And she was called felonye.

ANOTHER image, that Vilanye **Vilanye**
Ycleped was, saugh I and fond
Upon the walle on hir right hond.
Vilanye was lyk somdel
That other image; and, trusteth wel,
She semed a wikked creature.
By countenance, in portraiture,
She semed be ful despitous,
And eek ful proud and outrageous.
Wel coude he peynte, I undertake,
That swiche image coude make.
ful foul and cherlish semed she,
And eek vilaynous for to be,
And litel coude of norture,
To worshipec any creature.

AN next was peynted Coveityse, **Coveityse**
That eggeth folk, in many gyse,
To take and yeve right nought ageyn,

And grete tresours up to leyn.
And that is she that for usure
Leneth to many a creature
The lasse for the more winning,
So covetous is her brenning.
And that is she, for penyes fele,
That techeth for to robbe and stele
These theves, and these smale harlotes;
And that is routhe, for by hir throttes
ful many oon hangeth at the laste.
She maketh folk compasse and caste
To taken other folkes thing,
Through robberie, or miscounting.
And that is she that maketh trechoures;
And she that maketh false pledoures,
That with hir termes and hir domes
Doon maydens, children, and eek gromes
Hir heritage to forgo.
ful croked were hir hondes two;
for Coveityse is ever wood
To grypen other folkes good.
Coveityse, for hir winning,
ful leef hath other mennes thing.

ANOTHER image set saugh I
Next Coveityse faste by,
And she was cleped Hvarice. **Hvarice**
ful foul in peynting was that vice;



ful sad and caytif was she eek,
And also grene as any leek.
So yvel hewed was hir colour,
Hir semed have lived in langour.
She was lyk thing for hungre deed,
That ladde hir lyf only by breed
Knedden with eisel strong and egre;
And therto she was lene and megre.
And she was clad ful povrely,
Al in an old torn courtepy,
As she were al with dogges torn;
And bothe bihinde and eek biforn
Clouted was she beggarly.
A mantel heng hir faste by,
Upon a perche, weyke and smalle;
A burnet cote heng therwithalle,
Furred with no menivere,
But with a furre rough of here,
Of lambeskinnes hevy and blake;
It was ful old, I undertake,
for Avarice to clothe hir wel
Ne hasteth hir, never a del;
for certeynly it were hir loth
To weren ofte that ilke cloth;
And if it were forwered, she
Wolde have ful greet necessitee
Of clothing, er she boughte hir newe,

Al were it bad of wolfe and hewe.
This Avarice held in hir hande
A purs, that heng down by a bande;
And that she hidde and bond so stronge,
Men must abyde wonder longe
Out of that purs er ther come ought,
for that ne cometh not in hir thought;
It was not, certein, hir entente
That fro that purs a peny wente. **Envye**
AND by that image, nygh ynough,
Was peynt Envye, that never lough,
Nor never wel in herte ferde
But if she outhur saugh or herde.
Som greet mischaunce, or greet distresse,
Nothing may so moch hir plesse
As mischef and misaventure;
Or whan she seeth discomfiture
On any worthy man to falle,
Than lyketh hir ful wel withalle.
She is ful glad in hir corage,
If she see any greet linage
Be brought to nought in shamful wyse.
And if a man in honour ryse,
Or by his witte, or by prowessse,
Of that hath she gret hevinesse;
for, trusteth wel, she goth nigh wood
Whan any chaunce happeth good.



Envye is of swich crueltee,
That feith ne trouthe holdeth she
To frend ne felawe, bad or good.
Ne she hath kin noon of hir blood,
That she nis ful hir enemy;
She nolde, I dar seyn hardely,
Hir owne fader ferde wel.
And sore abyeth she everydel
Hir malice, and hir maltalent;
for she is in so greet turment
And hath such wo, whan folk doth good,
That nigh she melteth for pure wood;
Hir herte herveth and tobreketh
That God the peple wel awreketh.
Envye, ywis, shal never lette
Som blame upon the folk to sette.
I trowe that if Envye, ywis,
Knewe the beste man that is
On this syde or beyond the see,
Yit somewhat lakken him wolde she.
And if he were so hende and wys,
That she ne mighte al abate his prys,
Yit wolde she blame his worthinesse,
Or by hir wordes make it lesse.
I saugh Envye, in that peynting,
Hadde a wonderful loking;
for she ne loked but awry,

Or overthwart, al baggingly.
And she hadde eek a foul usage;
She mighte loken in no visage
Of man or womman forthright pleyn,
But shette oon ye for disdeyn;
So for envye brenned she
Whan she mighte any man ysee,
That fair, or worthy were, or wys,
Or elles stood in folkes prys.

SOROWE was peynted next Envye
Upon that walle of masonrye. **Sorowe**
But wel was seen in hir colour
That she hadde lived in langour;
Hir semed have the jaunyce.
Nought half so pale was Avaryce,
Nor nothing lyk, as of lenesse;
for sorowe, thought, and greet distresse,
That she hadde suffred day and night
Made hir ful yelwe, and nothing bright,
ful fade, pale, and megre also.
Was never wight yit half so wo
As that hir semed for to be,
Nor so fulfilled of ire as she.
I trowe that no wight mighte hir plesse,
Nor do that thing that mighte hir ese;
Nor she ne wolde hir sorowe slake,
Nor comfort noon unto hir take;

The
Romaunt
of the
Rose

So depe was hir wo bigonnen,
And eek hir herte in angre ronnen,
A sorowful thing wel semed she.
Nor she hadde nothing slowe be
for to forcracchen al hir face,
And for to rende in many place
hir clothes, and for to tere hir swire,
As she that was fulfilled of ire;
And al to torn lay eek hir here
Aboute hir shuldres, here and there,
As she that hadde it al to rent
for angre and for maltalent.
And eek I telle you certeinly
How that she weep ful tenderly.
In world nis wight so hard of herte
That hadde seen hir sorowes smerte,
That nolde have had of hir pitee,
So wobigoon a thing was she.
She al todasshte herself for wo,
And smoot togider her handes two.
To sorwe was she ful ententyf,
That woful reccheles caityf;
Hir roughte litel of pleying,
Or of clipping or of kissing;
for whoso sorowful is in herte
him liste not to pleye ne sterte,
Nor for to daunsen, ne to singe,
Ne may his herte in temper bringe
To make joye on even or morowe;
for joye is contraire unto sorowe.

Elde was peynted after this,
That shorter was a foot, ywis,
Than she was wont in her yonghede.
Annethe herself she mighte fede;
So feble and eek so old was she
That faded was al hir beautee.
ful salowe was waxen hir colour,
hir heed forhoor was, whyt as flour.
Ywis, gret qualm ne were it noon,
Ne sinne, although hir lyf were gon.
Al woxen was hir body unwelde,
And drye, and dwyned al for elde.
A foul forwelked thing was she
That whylom round and softe had be.
hir eres shoken fast withalle,
As from her heed they wolde falle.
hir face frounced and forpynd,
And bothe hir hondes lorn, fordwyned.
So old she was that she ne wente
A foot, but it were by potente.

Tyme, that passeth night and day,
And resteles travayleth ay,
And steleth from us so prively,
That to us seemeth sikerly
That it in oon point dwelleth ever,
And certes, it ne resteth never,
But goth so faste, and passeth ay,
That ther nis man that thinke may
What tyme that now present is:
Asketh at these clerkes this;
for er men thinke it redily,
Thre tymes been ypassed by.
The tyme, that may not sojourne,
But goth, and never may retourne,

As water that doun renneth ay,
But never drope retourne may;
Ther may nothing as tyme endure,
Metal, nor erthely creature;
for alle thing it fret and shal:
The tyme eek, that chaungeth al,
And al doth waxe and fostred be,
And alle thing distroyeth he:
The tyme, that eldeth our auncessours
And eldeth kinges and emperours,
And that us alle shal overcomen
Er that deeth us shal have nomen:
The tyme, that bath al in welde
To elden folk, had maad hir elde
So inly, that, to my witing,
She mighte helpe herself nothing,
But turned ageyn unto childhede;
She had nothing herself to lede,
Ne wit ne pith inwith hir holde
More than a child of two year olde.
But natheles, I trowe that she
Was fair sumtyme, and fresh to see,
Whan she was in hir rightful age;
But she was past al that passage
And was a doted thing bicomen.
A furred cope on had she nomen;
Wel had she clad herself and warm,
for cold mighte elles doon hir harm.
These olde folk have alwey colde,
hir kinde is swiche, whan they ben olde.
ANOTHER thing was doon ther write,
That semede lyk an ipocrite,
And it was cleped Pope holy,
That ilke is she that prively
Ne spareth never a wikked dede,
Whan men of hir taken non hede;
And maketh hir outward precious,
With pale visage and pitous,
And semeth a simple creature;
But ther nis no misaventure
That she ne thenketh in hir corage,
ful lyk to hir was that image,
That maketh was lyk hir semblaunce.
She was ful simple of countenance,
And she was clothed and eek shod,
As she were, for the love of God,
Yolden to religioun,
Swich semed hir devocioun.
A sauter held she faste in honde,
And bisily she gan to fonde
To make many a feynt prayere
To God, and to his seyntes dere.
Ne she was gay, fresh, ne jolyf,
But semed be ful ententyf
To gode werkes, and to faire,
And therto she had on an hair.
Ne certes, she was fat nothing,
But semed wery for fasting;
Of colour pale and deed was she.
from hir the gate shal werned be
Of paradys, that blisful place;
for swich folk maketh lene hir face,
As Crist seith in his evangyle,
To gete hem prys in toun a while;

And for a litel glorie veine
They lesen God and eek his reine.
AND alderlast of everichoon,
Was peynted Povert al aloon,
That not a peny hadde in wolde,
Although that she hir clothes solde,
And though she shulde anhonged be;
for naked as a worm was she.
And if the weder stormy were,
for colde she shulde have deyed there.
She hadde on but a streit old sak,
And many a clout on it ther stak;
This was hir cote and hir mantel,
No more was there, never a del,
To clothe her with; I undertake,
Gret leyser hadde she to quake.
And she was put, that I of talke,
for fro these other, up in an halke;
There lurked and there coured she,
for poure thing, wherso it be,
Is shamfast, and despyed ay.
Acursed may wel be that day,
That poure man conceyved is;
for God wot, al to seld, ywis,
Is any poure man wel fed,
Or wel arayed or yclad,
Or wel biloved, in swich wyse
In honour that he may aryse.

ALLE these thinges, wel avysed,
As I have you er this devysed,
With gold and asure over alle
Depeynted were upon the walle.
Squar was the wal, & high somdel;
Enclosed, and ybarred wel,
In stede of hegge, was that gardyn;
Com never shepherde therin.
Into that gardyn, wel ywrought,
Whoso that me coude have brought,
By laddre, or elles by degree,
It wolde wel have lyked me.
for swich solace, swich joye, and play,
I trowe that never man ne say,
As in that place delituous.
The gardyn was not daungerous
To herberwe briddes many oon.
So riche a yerd was never noon
Of briddes songe, and braunches grene.
Therin were briddes mo, I wene,
Than been in alle the rewme of fraunce.
ful blisful was the accordaunce
Of swete and pitous songe they made,
for al this world it oughte glade.
And I myself so mery ferde,
Whan I hir blisful songes herde,
That for an hundred pound nolde I,
If that the passage openly
hadde been unto me free
That I nolde entren for to see
Chassemble, God kepe it fro care!
Of briddes, whiche therinne were,
That songen, through hir mery throtes,
Daunces of love, and mery notes.
Whan I thus herde foules singe,
I fel faste in a weymtinge,

By which art, or by what engyn
I mighte come in that gardyn;
But way I couthe finde noon
Into that gardyn for to goon.
Ne nought wiste I if that ther were
Eyther hole or place or where,
By which I mighte have entree;
Ne ther was noon to teche me;
for I was al aloon, ywis,
ful wo and anguissous of this.
Til atte laste bithoughte I me,
That by no weye ne mighte it be;
That ther nas laddre or wey to passe,
Or hole, into so fair a place.

Envyroning even in compas
The closing of the square wal,
Til that I fond a wicket smal
So shet, that I ne mighte in goon,
And other entree was ther noon.

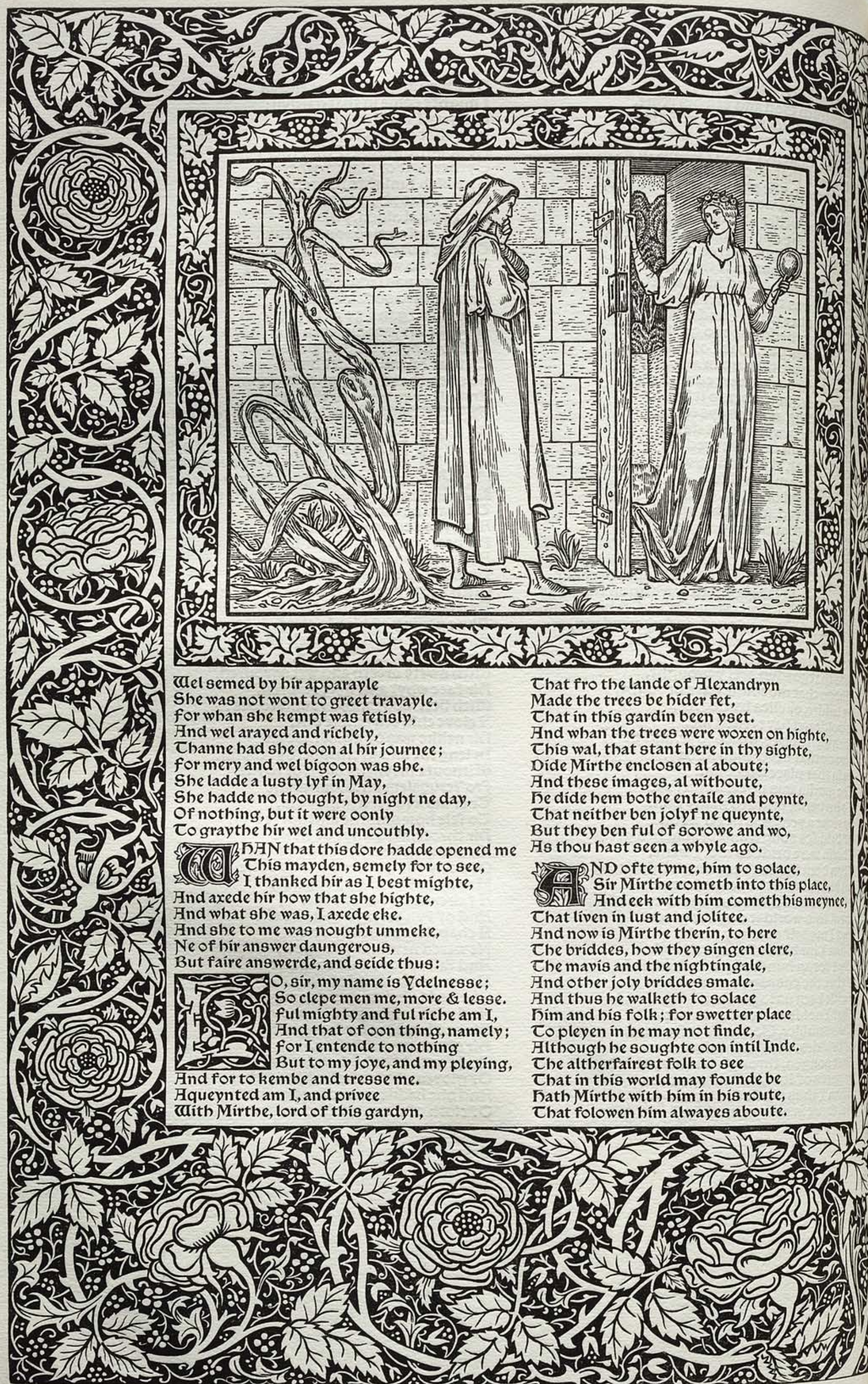
UPON this dore I gan to smyte,
That was so fetys and so lyte;
for other wey coude I not seke.
ful long I shoof, and knokked eke,
And stood ful long & oft herking
If that I herde a wight coming;

Til that the dore of thilke entree
A mayden curteys opened me.
hir heer was as yelow of hewe
As any basin scoured newe.
hir flesh as tendre as is a chike,
With bente browes, smothe and slike;
And by mesure large were
The opening of hir yen clere.
hir nose of good proporcioun,
hir yen greye as a faucoun,
With swete breeth and wel savoured.
hir face whyt and wel coloured,
With litel mouth, and round to see;
A clove chin eek hadde she.
hir nekke was of good fasoun
In lengthe and gretnesse, by resoun,
Withoute bleyne, scabbe, or royne.
fro Jerusalem unto Burgoyne
Ther nis a fairer nekke, ywis,
To fele how smothe and softe it is.
hir throte, also whyt of hewe
As snow on braunche snowed newe.
Of body ful wel wrought was she
Men neded not, in no cuntree,
A fairer body for to seke.
And of fyn orfrays had she eke
A chapelet: so semly oon
Ne wered never mayde upon;
And faire above that chapelet
A rose gerland had she set.
She hadde in honde a gay mirour,
And with a riche gold tressour
hir heed was tressed queyntely;
hir sleeves sewed fetisly.
And for to kepe hir hondes faire
Of gloves whyte she hadde a paire.
And she hadde on a cote of grene
Of cloth of Gaunt; withouten wene,

The
Romaunt
of the
Rose

The
Door

Ydel-
nesse



Wel semed by hir apparayle
She was not wont to greet travayle.
for whan she kempt was fetisly,
And wel arayed and richely,
Thanne had she doon al hir journee;
for mery and wel bigoon was she.
She ladde a lusty lyf in May,
She hadde no thought, by night ne day,
Of nothing, but it were oonly
To graythe hir wel and uncouthly.

WHAN that this dore hadde opened me
This mayden, semely for to see,
I thanked hir as I best myghte,
And axede hir how that she highte,
And what she was, I axede eke.
And she to me was nought unmeke,
Ne of hir answer dangerous,
But faire answerde, and seide thus:

O, sir, my name is Ydelnesse;
So clepe men me, more & lesse.
ful mighty and ful riche am I,
And that of oon thing, namely;
for I entende to nothing
But to my joye, and my pleying,
And for to kembe and tresse me.
Hqueynted am I, and privee
With Mirthe, lord of this gardyn,

That fro the lande of Alexandryn
Made the trees be hider fet,
That in this gardyn been yset.
And whan the trees were woxen on highte,
This wal, that stant here in thy sighte,
Dide Mirthe enclosen al aboute;
And these images, al withoute,
He dide hem bothe entaile and peynte,
That neither ben jolyf ne queynte,
But they ben ful of sorowe and wo,
As thou hast seen a while ago.

AND ofte tyme, him to solace,
Sir Mirthe cometh into this place,
And eek with him cometh his meynce,
That liven in lust and jolitee.
And now is Mirthe therin, to here
The briddes, how they singen clere,
The mavis and the nightingale,
And other joly briddes smale.
And thus he walketh to solace
Him and his folk; for swetter place
To pleyen in he may not finde,
Although he soughte oon intil Inde.
The altherfairest folk to see
That in this world may founde be
Hath Mirthe with him in his route,
That folowen him alwayes aboute.

WHEN Ydelnesse had told al this,
And I hadde herkned wel, ywis,
Than seide I to dame Ydelnesse:
Now also wisely God me blesse,
Sith Mirthe, that is so fair and free,
Is in this yerde with his meynce,
fro thilke assemblee, if I may,
shal no man wene me today,
That I this night ne mote it see.
for, wel wene I, ther with him be
A fair and joly companye
fulfilled of alle curtesye.
And forth, withoute wordes mo,
In at the wicket wente I tho,
That Ydelnesse hadde opened me,
Into that gardyn fair to see.

AND whan I was therin, ywis,
Myn herte was ful glad of
this.
for wel wende I ful sikertly
Have been in paradys
erthely;
So fair it was, that, trusteth
wel,
It semed a place espirituel.
for certes, as at my devys,

Ther is no place in paradys
So good in for to dwelle or be
As in that Gardyn, thoughte me;
for there was many a brid singing,
Throughout the yerde al thringing.
In many places were nightingales,
Alpes, finches, and wodewales,
That in her swete song delyten
In thilke place as they habytten.
Ther mighte men see many flokkes
Of turtles and of laverokkes.
Chalaundres fele saw I there,
That wery, nigh forsongen were.
And thrustles, terins, and mavyys,
That songen for to winne hem prys,
And eek to sormounte in hir song
These other briddes hem among.
By note made fair servyse
These briddes, that I you devyse;
They songe hir song as faire and wel
As angels doon espirituel.
And, trusteth wel, whan I hem herde,
full lustily and wel I ferde;
for never yit swich melodye
Swich swete song was hem among,
That me thoughte it no briddes song,
But it was wonder lyk to be
Song of mermaydens of the see;
That, for her singing is so clere,
Though we mermaydens clepe hem here
In English, as in our usaunce,
Men clepen hem sereyns in fraunce.
Ententif weren for to singe
These briddes, that nought unkuninge
Were of hir craft, and apprentys,
But of hir song gotyl and wys,

And certes, whan I herde hir song,
And saw the grene place among,
In herte I wex so wonder gay,
That I was never erst, er that day,
So jolyf, nor so wel bigo,
Ne mery in herte, as I was tho.
And than wiste I, and saw ful wel,
That Ydelnesse me served wel,
That me putte in swich jolitee.
hir freend wel oughte I for to be,
Sith she the dore of that gardyn
Hadde opened, and me leten in.
from hennesforth how that I wroughte,
I shal you tellen, as me thoughte.
first, wherof Mirthe served there,
And eek what folk ther with him were,
Withoute fable I wol descryve.
And of that gardyn eek as blyve
I wol you tellen after this.
The faire fasoun al, ywis,
That wel ywrought was for the nones,
I may not telle you al at ones:
But as I may and can, I shal
By ordre tellen you it al.
ful fair servyse and eek ful swete
These briddes maken as they sete.
Layes of love, ful wel sowning
They songen in hir jargonig;
Summe highe and summe eek lowe songe
Upon the braunches grene yspronge.
The sweetnesse of hir melodye
Made al myn herte in reverdye.
And whan that I hadde herd, I trowe,
These briddes singing on a rowe,
Than mighte I not withholden me
That I ne wente in for to see
Sir Mirthe; for my desiring
Was him to seen, over alle thing.
his countenance and his manere:
That sighte was to me ful dere.

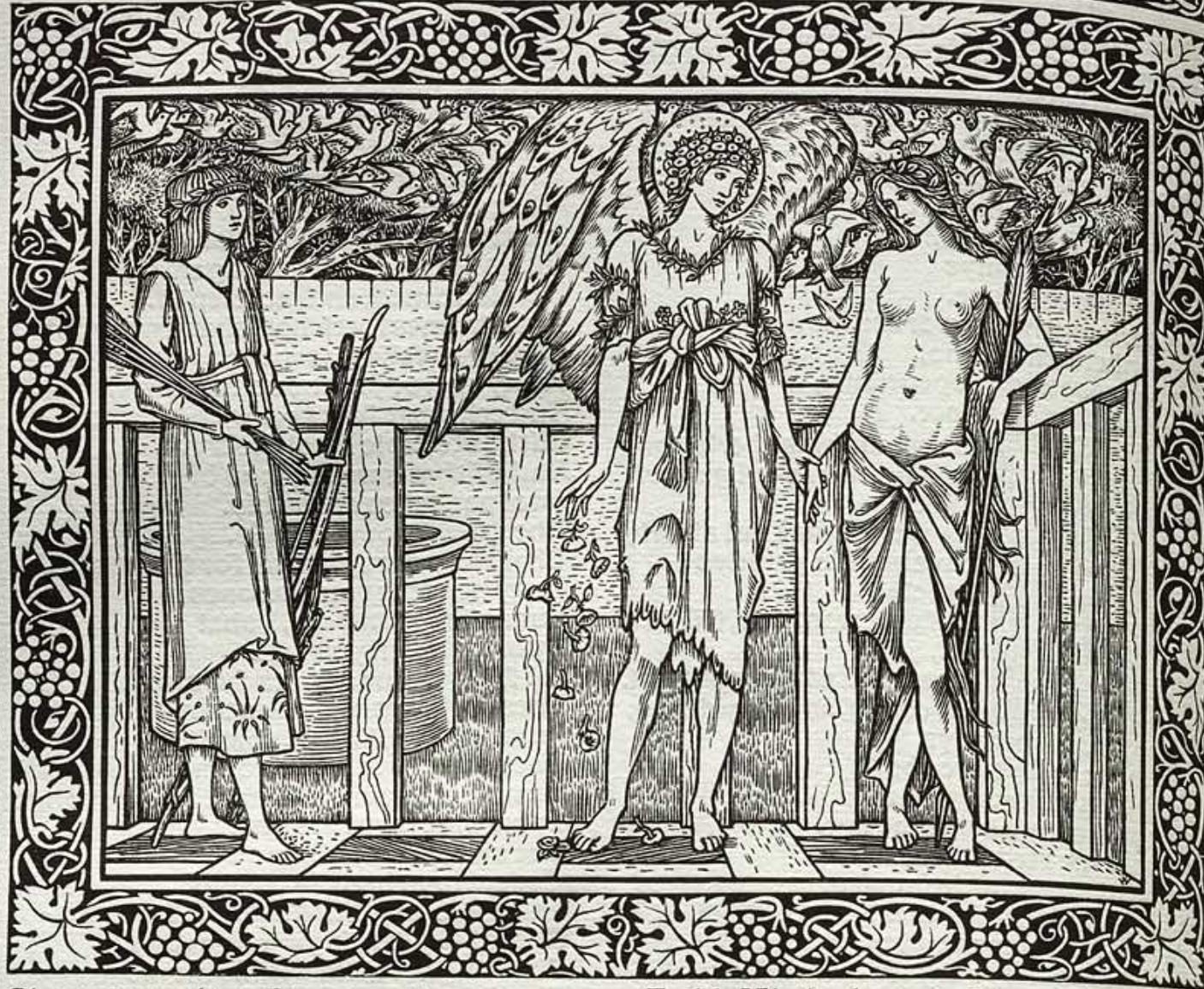
WHO wente I forth on my right hond
Down by a litel path I fond
Of mentes ful, and fenel grene;
And faste by, withoute wene,
Sir Mirthe I fond; and right anoon
Unto sir Mirthe gan I goon,
Theras he was, him to solace.
And with him, in that lusty place,
So fair folk and so fresh hadde he,
That whan I saw, I wondred me
fro whennes swich folk mighte come,
So faire they weren, alle and some;
for they were lyk, as to my sighte,
To angels, that ben fethered brighte.

THIS folk, of which I telle you so,
Upon a carole wenten tho.
A lady caroled hem, that highte
Gladnes, the blisful and the lighte;
Wel coude she singe and lustily,
Non half so wel and semely,
And make in song swich refreininge,
It sat hir wonder wel to singe.
hir vois ful cleer was and ful swete.

The
Romaunt
of the
Rose

Sir
Mirthe

Glad-
nesse



She was nought rude ne unmete,
But couthe ynow of swich doing
As longeth unto caroling:
for she was wont in every place
To singen first, folk to solace;
for singing most she gaf hir to;
No craft had she so leef to do.

WHO mightest thou caroles seen,
And folk ther daunce and mery been,
And make many a fair tourning
Upon the grene gras springing.
Ther mightest thou see these floutours,
Minstrales, and eek jogelours,
That wel to singe dide hir payne.
Somme songe songes of Loreyne;
for in Loreyne hir notes be
ful swetter than in this contree.
Ther was many a timbestere,
And saylours, that I dar wel swere
Couthe hir craft ful parfitly.
The timbres up ful sotilly
They caste, and henten hem ful ofte
Upon a finger faire and softe,
That they ne fayled nevermo.
ful fetis damiselles two,
In kirtles, and non other wede,
And faire tressed every tresse,

Hadde Mirthe doon, for his noblesse,
Amidde the carole for to daunce;
But herof lyth no remembraunce,
How that they daunced queyntely.
That oon wolde come al prively
Agayn that other: and whan they were
Togidre almost, they threwe yfere
Hir mouthes so, that through hir play
It semed as they kiste alway;
To dauncen wel coude they the gyse;
What shulde I more to you devyse?
Ne bede I never thennes go.
Whyles that I saw hem daunce so.

CURTESYE
WON the carole wonder faste
I gan biholde; til atte laste
A lady gan me for to espye,
And she was cleped Curtesye.
The worshipful, the debonaire,
I pray God ever falle hir faire!
ful curteisly she called me,
What do ye there, beau sire? quod she,
Come neer, and if it lyke yow
To dauncen, daunceth with us now.
And I, withoute taryng,
Wente into the caroling.
I was abasshed never a del,
But it me lykede right wel
That Curtesye me cleped so,

And bad me on the daunce go.
for if I hadde durst, certeyn
I wolde have caroled right fayn,
As man that was to daunce blythe.
Than gan I loken ofte sythe
The shap, the bodies, and the cheres,
The countenance and the maneres
Of alle the folk that daunced there,
Of alle the folk that they were.

AL fair was Mirthe, ful long & high;
A fairer man I never sigh.
As round as appel was his face,
ful rody and whyt in every place.
fetys he was and wel beseye,
With metely mouth and yen greye;

His nose by mesure wrought ful right;
Crisp was his heer, and eek ful bright.
His shuldres of a large brede,
And smalish in the girdilstede.
He semed lyk a portreiture,
So noble he was of his stature,
So fair, so joly, and so fetys,
With limes wrought at poynt devys,
Deliver, smert, and of gret might;
Ne sawe thou never man so light.
Of berde unnethe hadde he nothing,
for it was in the firste spring.
ful yong he was, and mery of thought,
And in samyt, with briddes wrought,
And with gold beten fetisly,
His body was clad ful richely.
Wrought was his robe in straunge gyse,
And al toslit for queyntyse
In many a place, lowe and hye.
And shod he was with greet maistrye,
With shoon decoped, and with laas.
By druerye, and by solas,
His leef a rosen chapelet
Had maad, and on his heed it set.

WITE ye who was his leef?
Dame Gladnes ther was him so leef,
That singeth so wel with glad
corage,
That from she was twelve yeer of
age,

she of hir love graunt him made.
Sir Mirthe hir by the finger hadde
In daunsing, and she him also;
Gret love was atwixe hem two.
Bothe were they faire and brighte of hewe;
She semede lyk a rose newe
Of colour, and hir flesh so tendre,
That with a brere smale and slendre
Men mighte it cleve, I dar wel sayn.
Hir forheed, frounceles al playn.
Bente were hir browes two,
Hir yen greye, and gladde also,
That laughed ay in hir semblaunt,
first or the mouth, by covenant,
I not what of hir nose descryve;
So fair hath no womman alyve.
Hir heer was yelow, and cleer shyning,
I wot no lady so lyking.
Of orfrays fresh was hir gerland;

I, whiche seen have a thousand,
Saugh never, ywis, no gerland yit,
So wel ywrought of silk as it.
And in an overgilt samyt
Clad she was, by gret delyt,
Of which hir leef a robe werde,
The myrier she in herte ferde.

ND next hir wente, on hir other syde,
The God of Love, that can devyde
Love, as him lyketh it to be.
But he can cherles daunten, he,
And maken folkes pryde fallen.
And he can wel these lordes thrallen,
And ladies putte at lowe degree,
Whan he may hem to proude see.

THIS God of Love of his fasoun
Was lyk no knave, ne quistroun;
His beautee gretly was to pryse.
But of his robe to devyse
I drede encombred for to be,
for nought yelad in silk was he,
But al in floures and flourettes,
Ypainted al with amorettes;
And with losenges and scochouns,
With briddes, libardes, and lyouns,
And other beestes wrought ful wel.
His garnement was everydel
Yportreyd and ywrought with floures,
By dyvers medling of coloures.
floures ther were of many gyse
Yset by compas in assyse;
Ther lakked no flour, to my dome,
Ne nought so muche as flour of brome,
Ne violete, ne eek pervenke,
Ne flour non, that man can on thenke,
And many a roseleef ful long
Was entemedled theramong:
And also on his heed was set
Of roses rede a chapelet.

But nightingales, a ful gret route,
That flyen over his heed aboute,
The leves felden as they flyen;
And he was al with briddes wryen,
With popinjay, with nightingale,
With chalaundre, and with wodewale,
With finch, with lark, and with archaungel.
He semede as he were an aungel
That down were comen fro hevne clere.

OVE hadde with him a bachelere,
That he made alweyes with him be;
Swete Loking cleped was he.
This bachelere stood biholding
The daunce, and in his honde holding
Turke bowes two hadde he.

That oon of hem was of a tree
That bereth a fruyt of savour wikke;
ful croked was that foule stikke,
And knotty here and there also,
And blak as bery, or any slo.
That other bowe was of a plante
Withoute wem, I dar warante,
ful even, and by proporcioun
Tretys and long, of good fasoun.
And it was peynted wel and thwiten,

The
Romaunt
of the
Rose

Cupide

Swete-
Loking



And overal diaped and writen
With ladies and with bacheleres,
ful lightsom and ful glad of cheres.
These bowes two held Swete/Loking,
That semed lyk no gadeling.
And ten brode arrowes held he there,
Of which five in his right hond were.
But they were shaven wel and dight,
Nokked and fethered aright;
And al they were with gold bigoon,
And stronge poynted everichoon,
And sharpe for to herven weel;
But iren was ther noon ne steel;
for al was gold, men mighte it see,
Outtake the fetheres and the tree.

THE swiftest of these arrowes fyve
Out of a bowe for to dryve,
And best yfethered for to flee,
And fairest eek, was cleped Beautee. **Beautee**
That other arowe, that hurteth leese,
Was cleped, as I trowe, Simplese. **Simplese**
The thridde cleped was fraunchyse, **fraun-**
chyse
That fethered was, in noble wyse,
With valour and with curtesye.
The fourthe was cleped Companye, **Com-**
panye
That hevy for to sheten is;
But whoso sheteth right, ywis,

May therwith doon gret harm and wo.
The fyfte of these, and laste also,
fair/Semblaunt men that arowe calle, **fair-**
Semblaunt
The leeste grevous of hem alle;
Yit can it make a ful gret wounde,
But he may hope his sores sounde,
That hurt is with that arowe, ywis;
his wo the bet bistowed is,
for he may soner have gladnesse,
his langour oughte be the lesse.

THE arrowes were of other gyse,
That been ful foule to devyse;
for shaft and ende, sooth to telle,
Were also black as feend in helle.

THE first of hem is called Pryde; **Pryde**
That other arowe next him bisyde,
It was ycleped Vilanye; **Vilanye**

That arowe was as with felonye
Envenimed, and with spitous blame.
The thridde of hem was cleped Shame. **Shame**
The fourthe, Manhope cleped is, **Manhope**
The fyfte, the Newe Thought, ywis. **Newe-**
Thought

THESE arrowes that I speke
of here,
Were alle fyve of oon manere,
And alle were they resemblable.
To hem was wel sitting and able



The foule croked bowe hidous,
That knotty was, and al roynous.
That bowe semede wel to shete
These arrowes fyve, that been unmete,
Contrarie to that other fyve.
But though I telle not as blyve
Of hir power, ne of hir might,
Hereafter shal I tellen right
The sothe, and eek signifaunce,
As fer as I have remembraunce:
Al shal be seid, I undertake,
Er of this boke an ende I make.

WHOM come I to my tale ageyn.
But alderfirst, I wol you seyn
The fasoun and the counten-
aunces
Of al the folk that on the
daunce is.

The God of Love, jolyf and light,
Ladde on his honde a lady bright,
Of high prys, and of greet degree.
This lady called was Beautee,
As was an arowe, of which I tolde.
ful wel ythewed was she holde;
Ne she was derk ne broun, but bright,
And cleer as is the monelight,
Ageyn whom alle the sterres semen
But smale candels, as we demen.

Hir flesh was tendre as dewe of flour,
Hir chere was simple as byrde in bour;
As whyt as lilie or rose in rys,
Hir face gentil and tretys.
fetys she was, and smal to see;
No windred browes hadde she,
Ne popped hir, for it neded nought
To windre hir, or to peynte hir ought.
Hir tresses yelow and longe straughten,
Unto hir heles doun they raughten;
Hir nose, hir mouth, and eye and cheke
Wel wrought, and al the remenaunt eke.
A ful grete savour and a swote
Me thinketh in myn herte rote,
As helpe me God, whan I remembre
Of the fasoun of every membre!
In world is noon so fair a wight;
for yong she was, and hewed bright,
Sadde, plesaunt, and fetys withalle,
Gente, and in hir middel smalle. **Richesse**

ISYDE Beaute yede Richesse,
An high lady of greet noblesse,
And greet of prys in every place.
But whoso durste to hir
trespace,
Or til hir folk, in worde or dede,
He were ful hardy, out of drede;
for bothe she helpe and hindre may:

And that is nought of yisterday
That riche folk have ful gret might
To helpe, and eek to greve a wight.
The beste and grettest of valour
Diden Richesse ful gret honour,
And besy weren hir to serve;
for that they wolde hir love deserve,
They cleped hir Lady, grete and smalle;
This wyde world hir dredeth alle;
This world is al in hir daungere.
Hir court hath many a losengere,
And many a traytour envious,
That ben ful besy and curious
for to dispreisen, and to blame
That best deserven love and name.
Bifore the folk, hem to bigylen,
These losengeres hem preysse, and smylen,
And thus the world with word anoynten;
But afterward they prikke and poynten
The folk right to the bare boon
Bihinde her bak whan they ben goon,
And foule abate the folkes prys.
ful many a worthy man and wys,
An hundred, have they don to dye,
These losengeres, through flaterye;
And maketh folk ful straunge be,
Theras hem oughte be prive.
Wel yvel mote they thryve and thee,
And yvel aryved mote they be,
These losengeres, ful of envye!
No good man loveth hir companye.

RICHESSE a robe of purple on hadde,
Ne trowe not that I lye or madde;
for in this world is noon itliche,
Ne by a thousand deel so riche,
Ne noon so fair; for it ful wel
With orfrays leyde was everydel,
And portrayed in the ribaninges
Of dukes stories, and of kinges.
And with a bend of gold tasseled,
And knoppes fyne of gold ameled.
Aboute hir nekke of gentil entaile
Was shet the riche chevesaile,
In which ther was ful gret plentee
Of stoncs clere and bright to see.

RICHESSE a girdel hadde upon,
The bokel of it was of a stoon
Of vertu greet, and mochel of might;
for whoso bar the stoon so bright,
Of venim thurte him nothing doute,
While he the stoon hadde him aboute.
That stoon was greetly for to love,
And til a riche mannes bihove
Worth al the gold in Rome and fryse.
The mourdaunt, wrought in noble wyse,
Was of a stoon ful precious,
That was so fyn and vertuous,
That hool a man it coude make
Of palasye, and of toothake.
And yit the stoon hadde suche a grace,
That he was siker in every place,
Al thilke day, not blind to been,
That fasting mighte that stoon seen.

The barres were of gold ful fyne,
Upon a tissu of satyne,
ful hevy, greet, and nothing light,
In everich was a besaunt wight.

ADON the tresses of Richesse
Was set a cercle, for noblesse,
Of brend gold, that ful lighte shoon;
So fair, trowe I, was never noon.
But he were cunning, for the nones,
That coude devysen alle the stoncs
That in that cercle shewen clere;
It is a wonder thing to here,
for no man coude preysse or gesse
Of hem the valewe or richesse.
Rubyes there were, saphyres, jagounces,
And emeraudes, more than two ounces,
But al bifore, ful sotilly,
A fyn carboucle set saugh I.
The stoon so clere was and so bright,
That, also sone as it was night,
Men mighte seen to go, for nede,
A myle or two, in lengthe and brede.
Swich light tho sprang out of the stoon,
That Richesse wonder brighte shoon,
Bothe hir heed, and al hir face,
And eke aboute hir al the place.

DAME Richesse on hir hond gan lede
A yong man ful of semelihede,
That she best loved of any thing;
His lust was muche in housholding.
In clothing was he ful fetys,
And lovede wel have hors of prys.
He wende to have reproved be
Of theft or mordre, if that he
Hadde in his stable an hakeney.
And therfore he desyred ay
To been aqueynted with Richesse;
for al his purpos, as I gesse,
Was for to make greet dispense,
Withoute werning or defence.
And Richesse mighte it wel sustene,
And hir dispenses wel mayntene,
And him alwey swich plentee sende
Of gold and silver for to spende
Withoute lakking or daungere,
As it were poured in a garnere.

AN after on the daunce wente
Largesse, that sette al hir entente
for to be honourable and free;
Of Alexandres kin was she;
Hir moste joye was, ywis,
Whan that she yaf, & seide have this.
Not Avarice, the foule caytyf,
Was half to grype so ententyf,
As Largesse is to yeve and spende.
And God ynough alwey hir sende,
So that the more she yaf away,
The more, ywis, she hadde alwey.
Gret loos hath Largesse, and gret prys;
for bothe wys folk and unwys
Were hoolly to hir baundon brought,
So wel with yiftes hath she wrought.
And if she hadde an enemy,

I trowe, that she coude craftily
Make him ful sone hir freend to be,
So large of yift and free was she;
Therefore she stood in love and grace
Of riche and poure in every place.
A ful gret fool is he, ywis,
That bothe riche and nigard is.
A lord may have no maner vice
That groweth more than avarice.
for nigard never with strengthe of hond
May winne him greet lordship or lond.
for freendes al to fewe hath he
To doon his wil perfourmed be.
And whoso wol have freendes here,
He may not holde his tresour dere.
for by ensample I telle this,
Right as an adamaunt, ywis,
Can drawen to him sotilly
The yren, that is leyde therby,
So draweth folkes hertes, ywis,
Silver and gold that yeven is.

LARGESSE hadde on a robe fresshe
Of riche purpur Sarsinesse.
Wel fourmed was hir face and clere,
And opened had she hir colere;
for she right there hadde in present
Unto a lady maad present
Of a gold broche, ful wel wrought.
And certes, it missat hir nought;
for through hir smokke, wrought with silk,
The flesh was seen, as whyt as milk.
Largesse, that worthy was and wys,
held by the honde a knight of prys,
Was sib to Arthour of Bretaigne.
And that was he that bar the enseigne
Of worship, and the gonfanoun.
And yit he is of swich renoun,
That men of him seye faire thinges
Bifore barouns, erles, and kinges.
This knight was comen al newly
fro tourneyinge faste by;
Ther hadde he doon gret chivalrye
Through his vertu and his maistrye;
And for the love of his lemman
Had cast down many a doughty man.

AN next him daunced dame
Fraunchyse,
Arrayed in ful noble gyse.
She was not broun ne dun of
hewe,
But whyt as snowe yfallen newe.
Hir nose was wrought at poynt devys,
for it was gentil and tretys;
With eyen gladde, and browes bente;
Hir heer down to hir heles wente.
And she was simple as downe on tree,
ful debonaire of herte was she.
She durste never seyn ne do
But that thing that hir longed to.
And if a man were in distresse,
And for hir love in hevynesse,
Hir herte wolde have ful greet pitee,
She was so amiable and free.

for were a man for hir bistad,
She wolde ben right sore adrad
That she dide over greet outrage,
But she him holpe his harm to aswage;
Hir thoughte it elles a vilanye.
And she hadde on a sukkenye,
That not of hempen herdes was;
So fair was noon in alle Arras.
Lord, it was rideled fetysly!
Ther nas nat oo poynt, trewely,
That it nas in his right assyse.
ful wel yclothed was fraunchyse;
for ther is no cloth sitteth bet
On damiselle, than doth roket.
A womman wel more fetys is
In roket than in cote, ywis.
The whyte roket, rideled faire,
Bitokened, that ful debonaire
And swete was she that it bere.

Yhir daunced a bachelere;
I can not telle you what he highte,
But fair he was, and of good highte,
Al hadde he be, I sey no more,
The lordes sone of Windesore.

AN next that daunced Curtesye,
That preised was of lowe and hye,
for neither proud ne fool was she.
She for to daunce called me,
I pray God yeve hir right good
grace!

Whan I com first into the place,
She was not nyce, ne outrageous,
But wys and war, and vertuous,
Of faire speche, and faire answer;
Was never wight misseid of here;
She bar no rancour to no wight.
Cleer broun she was, and therto bright
Of face, of body avenaunt;
I wot no lady so plesaunt.
She were worthy for to bene
An emperesse or crowned quene.

AN by hir wente a knight dauncing
That worthy was and wel speking,
And ful wel coude he doon honour.
The knight was fair and stif in stour,
And in armure a semely man,
And wel biloved of his lemman.

HIR Ydelnesse than saugh I,
That alwey was me faste by.
Of hir have I, withouten fayle,
Told yow the shap and apparayle,
for, as I seide, lo, that was she
That dide me so greet bountee,
That she the gate of the gardin
Undide, and leet me passen in.

AN after daunced, as I gesse,
Youthe fulfild of lustinesse,
That nas not yit twelve yeer of age,
With herte wilde, & thought volage;
Nyce she was, but she ne mente
Noon harm ne slight in hir entente,
But only lust and jolitee.
for yonge folk, wel witen ye,



Have litel thought but on hir play,
 Hir lemman was bisyde alway,
 In swich a gyse, that he hir kiste
 At alle tymes that him liste,
 That al the daunce mighte it see;
 They make no force of privetee;
 for who spak of hem yvel or wel,
 They were ashamed never a del,
 But men mighte seen hem kisse there,
 As it two yonge doves were,
 for yong was thilke bachelere,
 Of beaute wot I noon his pere;
 And he was right of swich an age
 As Youthe his leef, and swich corage.
THE lusty folk thus daunced there,
 And also other that with hem were,
 That weren alle of hir meynce;
 ful hende folk, and wys, and free,
 And folk of fair port, trewely,
 Ther weren alle comunly.
AN I hadde seen the counte-
 naunces
 Of hem that ladden thus these
 daunces,
 Than hadde I wil to goon & see
 The gardin that so lyked me,
 And loken on these faire loreris,
 On pyn trees, cedres, and oliveris.

The daunces than yended were;
 for many of hem that daunced there
 Were with hir loves went away
 Under the trees to have hir play.
A lord! they lived lustily!
 A gret fool were he, sikerly,
 That nolde, his thanks, swich lyf
 lede!
 for this dar I seyn, out of drede,
 That whoso mighte so wel fare,
 for better lyf thurte him not care;
 for ther nis so good paradys
 As have a love at his devys.
QUAT of that place wente I tho,
 And in that gardin gan I go,
 Pleying along ful merily.
 The God of Love ful hastily
 Unto him Swete/Loking clepte,
 No lenger wolde he that he kepte
 His bowe of golde, that shoon so bright.
 He bad him bende it anon/right;
 And he ful sone it sette on ende,
 And at a braid he gan it bende,
 And took him of his arrowes fyve,
 ful sharpe and redy for to dryve.
 Now God that sit in magestee
 fro deedly woundes kepe me,
 If so be that he wol me shete;



for if I with his arowe mete,
 It wol me greven sore, ywis!
 But I, that nothing wiste of this,
 Wente up and doun ful many a wey,
 And he me folwed faste alwey;
 But nowher wolde I reste me,
 Til I hadde al the yerde in be.
THE gardin was, by mesuring,
 Right even and squar in compassing;
 It was as long as it was large.
 Of fruyt had every tree his charge,
 But it were any hidous tree **The Trees**
 Of which ther were two or three.
 Ther were, and that wot I ful wel,
 Of pomgarnettes a ful gret del;
 That is a fruyt ful wel to lyke,
 Namely to folk whan they ben syke.
 And trees ther were, greet foisoun,
 That baren notes in hir sesoun,
 Such as men notemigges calle,
 That swote of savour been withalle.
 And alemandres greet plente,
 figes, and many a date tree
 Ther weren, if men hadde nede,
 Through the gardin in length and brede.
 Ther was eek wexing many a spyce,
 As clow, gelofre, and licoryce,
 Gingere, and greyn de paradys,

Canelle, and setewale of prys,
 And many a spyce delitable,
 To eten whan men ryse fro table.
 And many boomy trees ther were,
 That peches, coynes, and apples bere,
 Medlers, plumes, peres, chesteynes,
 Cheryse, of whiche many on fayn is,
 Notes, aleys, and bolas,
 That for to seen it was solas;
 With many high lorer and pyn
 Was renged clene al that gardyn;
 With cipres, and with oliveris,
 Of which that nigh no plente here is.
 Ther were elmes grete and stronge,
 Maples, asshe, ook, asp, planes longe,
 fyn ew, popler, and lindes faire,
 And othere trees ful many a payre.
WHAT sholde I telle you more of it?
 Ther were so many trees yit,
 That I sholde al encombred be
 Er I had rekened every tree.
THESE trees were set, that I devyse,
 Oon from another, in assyse,
 five fadome or sixe, I trowe so,
 But they were hye and grete also:
 And for to kepe out wel the sonne,
 The croppes were so thikke yronne,
 And every branch in other knet,

The
Romaunt
of the
Rose

The
Welles

And ful of grene leves set,
That sonne mighte noon descende,
Lest it the tendre grasses shende.
Ther mighte men does and roes ysee,
And of squires ful greet plente,
from bough to bough alwey leping.
Conies ther were also playing,
That comen out of hir claperes
Of sondry colours and maneres,
And maden many a turneyng
Upon the fresshe gras springing.
IN places saw I Welles there,
In whiche ther no frogges were,
And fair in shadwe was every welle;
But I ne can the nombre telle
Of stremes smale, that by devys
Mirthe had don come through condys,
Of which the water, in renning,
Gan make a noyse ful lyking.
ABOUT the brinkes of thise welles,
And by the stremes overal elles
Sprang up the gras, as thikke yset
And softe as any veluet,
On which men mighte his lemman leye,
As on a fetherbed, to pleye,
for therthe was ful softe and swete.
Through moisture of the welle wete
Sprang up the sote grene gras,
As fair, as thikke, as mister was.
But muche amended it the place,
That therthe was of swich a grace
That it of floures had plente,
That both in somer and winter be.
THER sprang the violete al newe,
And fresshe pervinke, riche of hewe,
And floures yelow, whyte, and rede;
Swich plente grew ther never in mede.
ful gay was at the ground, and queynt,
And poudred, as men had it peynt,
With many a fresh and sondry flour,
That casten up ful good savour.
IWOL not longe holde you in fable
Of al this gardin delitable.
I moot my tonge stinten nede,
for I ne may, withouten drede,
Naught tellen you the beautee al,
Ne half the bountee therewithal.
IWENTE on right honde and on left
About the place; it was not left,
Til I hadde al the yerde in been,
In the estres that men mighte seen.
And thus whyle I wente in my pley,
The God of Love me folowed ay,
Right as an hunter can abyde
The beste, til he seeth his tyde
To shete, at good mes, to the dere,
Whan that him nedeth go no nere.
AND so befel, I rested me
Besyde a welle, under a tree,
Which tree in fraunce men calle a pyn.
But, sith the tyme of kyng Pepyn,
Ne grew ther tree in mannes sighte
So fair, ne so wel woxe in highte;
In al that yerde so high was noon.

And springing in a marble stoon
Had nature set, the sothe to telle,
Under that pyn tree a welle.
And on the border, al withoute,
Was writen, in the stone aboute,
Lettres smale, that seyden thus:
Here starf the faire Narcissus.

NARCISUS was a bachelere,
That Love had caught in his
daungere,
And in his net gan him so streyme,
And dide him so to wepe and pleyne,
That nede him muste his tyf forgo.
for a fair lady, hight Echo,
him loved over any creature,
And gan for him swich peyne endure,
That on a tyme she him tolde,
That, if he hir loven nolde,
That hir behoved nedes dye,
Ther lay non other remedye.
But natheles, for his beautee,
So fiers and daungerous was he,
That he nolde graunten hir asking,
for weping, ne for fair praying.
And whan she herde him werne hir so,
She hadde in herte so gret wo,
And took it in so gret dyspyt,
That she, withoute more respyt,
Was deed anon. But, er she deyde,
ful pitously to God she preyde,
That proude/herted Narcissus,
That was in love so daungerous,
Mighte on a day ben hampred so
for love, and been so hoot for wo,
That never he mighte joye atteyne;
Than shulde he fele in every weyne
What sorowe trewe lovers maken,
That been so vilaynsly forsaken.
This prayer was but resonable,
Therfor God held it ferme and stable:
for Narcissus, shortly to telle,
By aventure com to that welle
To reste him in that shadowing
A day, whan he com fro hunting.
This Narcissus had suffred paynes
for renning alday in the playnes,
And was for thirst in greet distresse
Of hete, and of his werinesse
That hadde his breeth almost binomen.
Whan he was to that welle ycomen,
That shadwed was with braunches grene,
He thoughte of thilke water shene
To drinke and fresshe him wel withalle;
And down on knees he gan to falle,
And forth his heed and nekke out/straughte
To drinke of that welle a draughte.
And in the water anon was sene
His nose, his mouth, his yen shene,
And he therof was al abasshed;
His owne shadowe had him bitrasshed.
for wel wende he the forme see
Of a child of greet beautee.
Wel couthe Love him wreke tho
Of daunger and of pryde also,



That Narcissus somtyme him bere.
he quitte him wel his guerdon there;
for he so musede in the welle,
That, shortly al the sothe to telle,
he lovede his owne shadowe so,
That atte laste he starf for wo.
for whan he saugh that he his wille
Mighte in no maner wey fulfillen,
And that he was so faste caught
That he him couthe comfort naught,
he loste his wit right in that place,
And deyde within a litel space.
And thus his warisoun he took
for the lady that he forsook.

HOYES, I preye ensample taketh,
Ye that ayeins your love mistaketh:
for if hir deeth be yow to wyte,
God can ful wel your whyle quyte.

WHAN that this lettre, of whiche
I telle,
Had taught me that it was the
welle
Of Narcissus in his beautee,
I gan anon withdrawe me,
Whan it fel in my remembraunce,
That him bitidde swich mischaunce.
But at the laste than thoughte I,
That scatheles, ful sikerly,

I mighte unto The Welle go. **The Welle**
Wherof shulde I abasshen so?
Unto the welle than wente I me,
And down I louted for to see
The clere water in the stoon,
And eek the gravel, which that shoon
Down in the botme, as silver fyn;
for of the welle, this is the fyn.
In world is noon so cleer of hewe.
The water is ever fresh and newe
That welmeth up with wawes brighte
The mountance of two finger highte.
Abouten it is gras springing,
for moiste so thikke and wel lyking,
That it ne may in winter dye,
No more than may the see be drye.
DOWN at the botme set saw I
Two cristal stones craftely
In thilke fresshe and faire welle.
But o thing soothly dar I telle,
That ye wol holde a greet mervayle
Whan it is told, withouten fayle,
for whan the sonne, cleer in sighte,
Cast in that welle his bemes brighte,
And that the heet descended is,
Than taketh the cristal stoon, ywis,
Agayn the sonne an hundred hewes,
Blewe, yelow, & rede, that fresh and newe is.

The
Romaunt
of the
Rose

Yit hath the merveilous cristal
Swich strengthe, that the place overal,
Bothe fowl and tree, and leves grene,
And al the yerd in it is sene.
And for to doon you understonde,
To make ensample wol I fonde;
Right as a mirour openly
Sheweth al thing that stant therby,
As wel the colour as the figure,
Withouthen any coverture;
Right so the cristal stoon, shynynge,
Withouthen any disceyving,
The estres of the yerde accuseth
To him that in the water museth;
for ever, in which half that he be,
He may wel half the gardin see;
And if he turne, he may right wel
Seen the remenaunt everydel.
for ther is noon so litel thing
So hid, ne closed with shitting,
That it ne is sene, as though it were
Peynted in the cristal there.

THIS is the mirour perilous,
In which the proude Narcissus
Saw al his face fair and bright,
That made him sith to lye upright,
for whoso loke in that mirour,
Ther may nothing ben his socour
That he ne shal ther seen som thing
That shal him lede into loving.
ful many a worthy man hath it
Yblent; for folk of grettest wit
Ben sone caught here and awayted;
Withouthen respyt been they bayted.
Heer comth to folk of newe rage,
Heer chaungeth many wight corage;
Heer lyth no reed ne wit therto;
for Venus sone, daun Cupido,
Hath sowne there of love the seed,
That help ne lyth ther noon, ne reed,
So cercleth it the welle aboute.
His ginnes hath he set withoute
Right for to cacche in his panteres
These damoyssels and bacheleres.
Love will noon other bridde cacche,
Though he sette either net or lacche.
And for the seed that heer was sowne,
This welle is cleped, as wel is knowen,
The Welle of Love, of verray right,
Of which ther hath ful many a wight
Spoke in bokes dyversely.
But they shulle never so verily
Descripcioun of the welle here,
Ne eek the sothe of this matere,
As ye shulle, whan I have undo
The craft that hir bilongeth to.

WHY me lyked for to dwelle,
To seen the cristal in the welle,
That shewed me ful openly
A thousand thinges faste by.
But I may saye, in sory houre
Stood I to loken or to poure;
for sithen have I sore syked,
That mirour hath me now entryked.
But hadde I first knowen in my wit

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The vertue and the strengthe of it,
I nolde not have mused there;
Me hadde bet ben elleswhere;
for in the snare I fel anon,
That hath bitraissed many oon.

In thilke mirour saw I tho,
Among a thousand thinges mo,
A Roser charged ful of roses,
That with an hegge aboute enclos
is.

Tho had I swich lust and envye,
That, for Parys ne for Pavye,
Nolde I have left to goon and see
Ther grettest hepe of roses be.
Whan I was with this rage bent,
That caught hath many a man and shent,
Toward the roser gan I go.
And whan I was not fer therfro,
The savour of the roses swote
Me smoot right to the herte rote,
As I hadde al embawmed be.
And if I ne hadde endouted me
To have ben hated or assailed,
My thanks, wolde I not have failed
To pulle a rose of al that route
To beren in myn honde aboute,
And smellen to it wher I wente;
But ever I dredde me to repente,
And lest it greved or forthoughte
The lord that thilke gardyn wroughte.
Of roses were ther gret woon,
So faire wexe never in roon.
Of knoppes clos, som saw I there,
And some wel beter woxen were;
And some ther been of other moyssoun,
That drowe nigh to hir sesoun,
And spedde hem faste for to sprede;
I love wel swiche roses rede;
for brode roses, and open also,
Ben passed in a day or two;
But knoppes wilen fresshe be
Two dayes atte leest, or three.
The knoppes gretly lyked me,
for fairer may ther no man see.
Whoso mighte haven oon of alle,
It oughte him been ful leef withalle.
Mighte I a gerlond of hem geten,
for no richesse I wolde it leten.
Among the Knoppes I chees oon
So fair, that of the remenaunt noon
Ne preyse I half so wel as it,
Whan I avyse it in my wit.
for it so wel was enlumyned
With colour reed, as wel yfyned
As nature couthe it make faire.
And it had leves wel foure paire,
That Kinde had set through his knowing
Aboute the rede rose springing.
The stalke was as risshe right,
And theron stood the knoppe upright,
That it ne bowed upon no syde.
The swote smelle sprong so wyde
That it dide al the place aboute...

Thus far Geoffrey Chaucer; what follows is
thought to be by another hand.



WHAN I had smelled
the savour swote,
No wille hadde I fro
thens yit go,
But somdel neer it
wente I tho,
To take it; but myn
bond, for drede,
Ne dorste I to the
rose bede,

for thistels sharpe, of many maneres,
Netles, thornes, and hoked breres;
fulmuche they distourbled me,
for sore I dradde to harmed be.
The God of Love, with bowe bent,
That al day set hadde his talent
To pursuen and to spyen me,
Was stonde by a fige tree.
And whan he sawe how that I
Had chosen so ententify
The botoun, more unto my pay
Than any other that I say,
He took an arowe ful sharply whet,
And in his bowe whan it was set,
He streight up to his ere drough
The stronge bowe, that was so tough,
And shet at me so wonder smerte,
That through myn eye unto myn herte

The takel smoot, and depe it wente.
And therwithal such cold me hente,
That, under clothes warme and softe,
Sith that day I have chevered ofte.

WHAN I was hurt thus in that
stounde,
I fel down plat unto the grounde.
Myn herte failed and feynted ay,
And long tyme ther aswone I
lay.

But whan I com out of swoning,
And hadde wit, and my feling,
I was al maat, and wende ful wel
Of blood have loren a ful gret del.
But certes, the arowe that in me stood
Of me ne drew no drope of blood,
for why I found my wounde al dreve.

WHAN took I with myn hondis tweye
The arowe, and ful fast out it plight,
And in the pulling sore I sight.

SO at the last the shaft of tree
I drough out, with the fethers three.
But yet the hoked heed, ywis,
The whiche Beautee callid is,
Gan so depe in myn herte passe,
That I it mighte nought arace;
But in myn herte stille it stood,
Al bledde I not a drope of blood.

Beautee

The
Romaunt
of the
Rose

I was bothe anguissous and trouble
for the peril that I saw double;
I niste what to seye or do,
Ne gete a leche my woundis to;
for neithir thurgh gras ne rote,
Ne hadde I help of hope ne bote.
But to the botoun evermo
Myn herte drew; for al my wo,
My thought was in non other thing,
for hadde it been in my keping,
It wolde have brought my lyf agayn.
for certeinly, I dar wel seyn,
The sight only, and the savour,
Hlegged muche of my langour.

Simplese

THAN gan I for to drawe me
Toward the botoun fair to see;
And Love hadde gete him, in a
throwe,
Another arowe into his bowe,
And for to shete gan him dresse;
The arowis name was Simplese.
And whan that Love gan nyghe me nere,
He drew it up, withouten were,
And shet at me with al his might,
So that this arowe anon right
Thourghout myn eigh, as it was founde,
Into myn herte hath maad a wounde.
Thanne I anoon dide al my crafte
for to drawen out the shafte,
And therewithal I sighed eft.
But in myn herte the heed was left,
Which ay encreased my desyre,
Unto the botoun drawe nere;
And ever, mo that me was wo,
The more desyr hadde I to go
Unto the roser, where that grew
The fresshe botoun so bright of hewe.
Betir me were have leten be;
But it bihoved nedes me
To don right as myn herte bad.
for ever the body must be lad
Aftir the herte; in wele and wo,
Of force togidre they must go.
But never this archer wolde fyne
To shete at me with alle his pyne,
And for to make me to him mete.

Curtseye

THAN thridde arowe he gan to shete,
Whan best his tyme he mighte
espye,
The which was named Curtseye;
Into myn herte it dide avale.
Aswone I fel, bothe deed and pale;
Long tyme I lay, and stired nought,
Til I abraid out of my thought.
And faste than I avysed me
To drawen out the shafte of tree;
But ever the heed was left bihinde
for ought I couthe pulle or winde.
So sore it stikid whan I was hit,
That by no craft I might it flit;
But anguissous and ful of thought,
I felte such wo, my wounde ay wrought,
That somoned me alway to go

Toward the rose, that plesed me so;
But I ne durste in no manere,
Bicause the archer was so nere,
for evermore gladly, as I rede,
Brent child of fyr hath muche drede.
And, certis yit, for al my peyne,
Though that I sigh yit arwis reyne,
And grounde quarels sharpe of stele,
Ne for no payne that I might fele,
Yit might I not mysilf withholde
The faire roser to biholde;
for Love me yaf sich hardement
for to fulfille his comaundement.

APOON my feet I roos up than
feble, as a forwoundid man;
And forth to gon my might I sette,
And for the archer nolde I lette.
Toward the roser fast I drew;
But thornes sharpe mo than ynow
Ther were, and also thistels thikke,
And breres, brimme for to prikke,
That I ne mighte gete grace
The rowe thornes for to passe,
To sene the roses fresshe of hewe.
I must abide, though it me rewe,
The hegge aboute so thikke was,
That closid the roses in compas.
But o thing lyked me right wele;
I was so nygh, I mighte fele
Of the botoun the swote odour,
And also see the fresshe colour;
And that right gretly lyked me,
That I so ner it mighte see.
Sich joye anoon therof hadde I,
That I forgat my malady.
To sene it hadde I sich delyt,
Of sorwe and angre I was al quit,
And of my woundes that I had thar;
for nothing lyken me might mar
Than dwellen by the roser ay,
And thennes never to passe away.

AT whan a while I had be thar,
The God of Love, which al toshar
Myn herte with his arwis kene,
Caste him to yewe me woundis
grene.

He shet at me ful hastily
An arwe named Company,
The whiche takel is ful able
To make these ladies merciabe.
Than I anoon gan chaungen hewe
for grevaunce of my wounde newe,
That I agayn fel in swoning,
And sighed sore in compleyning.
Sore I compleyned that my sore
On me gan greven more and more.
I had non hope of allegaunce;
So nigh I drew to desperaunce,
I rought of dethe ne of lyf,
Whither that love wolde me dryf.
If me a martir wolde he make,
I might his power nought forsake.
And whyl for anger thus I wook,

THE God of Love an arowe took;
ful sharp it was and ful pugnaunt,
And it was callid fair Semblaunt,
The which in no wys wol consente,
That any lover him repente
To serve his love with herte and alle,
For any peril that may bifalle.

But though this arwe was kene grounde
As any rasour that is founde,
To cutte and kerve, at the poynt,
The God of Love it hadde anoynt
With a precious oynement,
Somdel to yewe aleggement
Upon the woundes that he had
Thurgh the body in my herte maad,
To helpe hir sores, and to cure,
And that they may the bet endure.
But yit this arwe, withoute more,
Made in myn herte a large sore,
That in ful gret peyne I abood.
But ay the oynement wente abrood;
Thurghout my woundes large and wyde
It spreadde aboute in every syde;
Thurgh whos vertu and whos might
Myn herte joyful was and light.
I had ben deed and al toshent
But for the precious oynement.
The shafte I drew out of the arwe,
Roking for wo right wondir narwe;
But the heed, which made me smerte,
Lette bihinde in myn herte
With other foure, I dar wel say,
That never wol be take away;
But the oynement halp me wele.
And yit sich sorwe dide I fele,
Of my woundes fresshe and newe,
That alday I chaunged hewe,
As men might see in my visage.
The arwis were so fulle of rage,
So variaunt of diversitee,
That men in everich mighte see
Bothe gret anoy and eek swetnesse,
And joye meynt with bittirnesse.
Now were they esy, now were they wood,
In hem I felte bothe harm and good;
Now sore without aleggement,
Now softening with oynement;
It softned here, and prikked there,
Thus ese and anger togidre were.

THE God of Love deliverly
Com lepard to me hastily,
And seide to me, in gret rape:
Yeld thee, for thou may not escape!
May no defence availle thee heere;
Therefore I rede mak no daungere.
If thou wolt yelde thee hastily,
Thou shalt the rather have mercy.
He is a fool in sikernesse,
That with daunger or stoutnesse
Rebellith ther that he shulde plesse;
In such folye is litel ese.
Be meek, wher thou must nedis bowe;
To stryve ageyn is nought thy prow.

Come at ones, and have ydo,
for I wol that it be so.

Than yeld thee here debonairly.

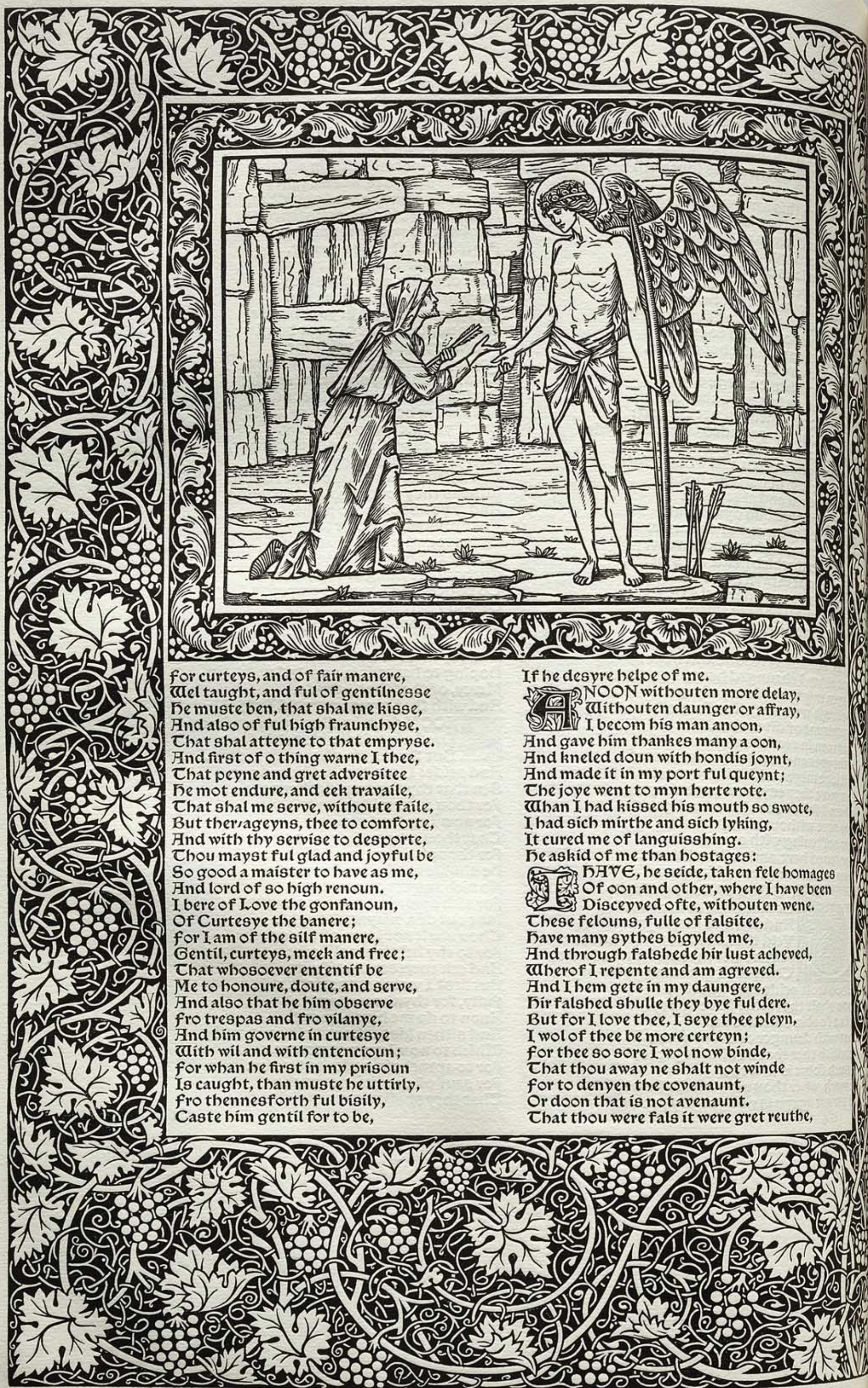
AND I answerid ful humbly:
Gladly, sir; at your bidding,
I wol me yelde in alle thing.

To your servyse I wol me take;
for God defende that I shulde make
Ageyn your bidding resistance;
I wol not doon so gret offence;
for if I dide, it were no skile.
Ye may do with me what ye wile,
Save or spille, and also sloo;
fro you in no wyse may I go.
My lyf, my deth, is in your honde,
I may not laste out of your bonde.
Pleynt at your list I yelde me,
Hoping in herte, that sumtyme ye
Comfort and ese shulle me sende;
Or ellis shortly, this is the ende,
Withouten helthe I moot ay dure,
But if ye take me to your cure.
Comfort or helthe how shuld I have,
Sith ye me hurte, but ye me save?
The helthe of lovers moot be founde
Wheras they token firste hir wounde.
And if ye list of me to make
Your prisoner, I wol it take
Of herte and wil, fully at gree.
Hoolly and pleynt I yelde me,
Withoute feynyn or feyntysse,
To be governed by your emprise.
Of you I here so much prys,
I wol ben hool at your devys
for to fulfille your lyking
And repente for nothing,
Hoping to have yit in som tyde
Mercy, of that that I abyde.

And with that covenaut yeld I me,

ANNOON down kneling upon my knee,
Profering for to kisse his feet;
But for nothing he wolde me lete,
And seide: I love thee bothe and preyse,
Sen that thyn answer doth me ese,
for thou answerid so curteisly.
for now I wot wel uttirly,
That thou art gentil, by thy speche.
for though a man fer wolde seche,
He shulde not finden, in certeyn,
No sich answer of no vileyn;
for sich a word ne mighte nought
Isse out of a vilayns thought.
Thou shalt not lesen of thy speche,
for to thy helping wol I eche,
And eek encreasen that I may.
But first I wol that thou obay
fully, for thyn avauntage,
Anon to do me here homage.
And sithen kisse thou shalt my mouth,
Which to no vilayn was never couth
for to aproche it, ne for to touche;
for sauf of cherlis I ne vouche
That they shulle never neigh it nere.

The
Romaunt
of the
Rose



for curteys, and of fair manere,
Wel taught, and ful of gentilnesse
He muste ben, that shal me kisse,
And also of ful high fraunchyse,
That shal atteyne to that emprise.
And first of o thing warne I thee,
That peyne and gret adversitee
He mot endure, and ech travaile,
That shal me serve, withoute faile,
But ther ageyns, thee to comforte,
And with thy servise to desporte,
Thou mayst ful glad and joyful be
So good a maister to have as me,
And lord of so high renoun.
I bere of Love the gonfanoun,
Of Curtesye the banere;
for I am of the silf manere,
Gentil, curteys, meek and free;
That whosoever ententif be
Me to honoure, dote, and serve,
And also that he him observe
fro trespas and fro vilanye,
And him governe in curtesye
With wil and with entencion;
for whan he first in my prisoun
Is caught, than muste he uttirly,
fro thennesforth ful bisily,
Caste him gentil for to be,

If he desyre helpe of me.
NOON withouten more delay,
Withouten daunger or affray,
I becom his man anon,
And gave him thanks many a oon,
And kneled down with hondis joyn,
And made it in my port ful queynt;
The joye went to myn herte rote.
Whan I had kissed his mouth so swote,
I had sich mirthe and sich lyking,
It cured me of languissching.
He askid of me than hostages:
HAVE, he seide, taken fele homages
Of oon and other, where I have been
Disceyved ofte, withouten wene.
These felouns, fulle of falsitee,
Have many sythes bigyled me,
And through falschede hir lust achieved,
Wherof I repente and am agreved.
And I hem gete in my daungere,
Hir falsched shulle they bye ful dere.
But for I love thee, I seye thee pleyn,
I wol of thee be more certeyn;
for thee so sore I wol now binde,
That thou away ne shalt not winde
for to denyen the covenaut,
Or doon that is not avenaunt.
That thou were fals it were gret reuthe,

Sith thou semest so ful of treuthe,
IF, if thee list to undirstande,
I mervelle thee asking this demande.
For why or wherfore shulde ye
Ostages or borwis aske of me,
Or any other sikirnesse,
Sith ye wote, in sothfastnesse,
That ye have me surprysed so,
And hool myn herte taken me fro,
That it wol do for me nothing
But if it be at your bidding?
Myn herte is yours, and myn right nought,
As it bihoveth, in dede and thought,
Redy in alle to worche your wille,
Whether so it turne to good or ille.
So sore it lustith you to plesse,
No man therof may you disseise,
Ye have theron set sich justise,
That it is werreyd in many wise.
And if ye doute it nolde obeie,
Ye may therof do make a keye,
And holde it with you for ostage.
NO certis, this is noon outrage,
Quoth Love, and fully I accord;
For of the body he is ful lord
That hath the herte in his tresor;
Outrage it were to asken more.
THAN of his aumener he drough
A litel keye, fetys ynough,
Which was of gold polissched clere,
And seide to me: With this keye here
Thyn herte to me now wol I shette;
for al my jowellis loke and knette
I binde under this litel keye,
That no wight may carye awaye;
This keye is ful of gret poeste.
WITH which anon he touchid me
Andir the syde ful softly,
That he myn herte sodeynly
Without al anoy had spered,
That yit right nought it hath me deder.
Whan he had doon his wil al out,
And I had put him out of dout,
IF, I seide, I have right gret wille
Your lust and plesaunce to fulfille.
Loke ye my servise take at gree,
By thilke feith ye owe to me.
I seye nought for recreaundyse,
for I nought doute of your servyse.
But the servaunt travelth in vayne,
That for to serven doth his payne
Unto that lord, which in no wyse
Can him no thank for his servyse.
LOVE seide: Dismaye thee nought,
In thank thy servise wol I take,
And high of degree I wol thee make,
If wikkidnesse ne hindre thee;
But, as I hope, it shal nought be.
To worship no wight by aventure
May come, but if he peyne endure.
Hoyde and suffre thy distresse;
That hurtith now, it shal be lesse;

I wot mysilf what may thee save,
What medicine thou woldist have.
And if thy trouthe to me thou kepe,
I shal unto thyn helping eke,
To cure thy woundes and make hem clene,
Wherso they be olde or grene;
Thou shalt be holpen, at wordis fewe,
for certeynly thou shalt wel shewe
Wher that thou servest with good wille,
for to complisshen and fulfille
My comaundementis, day and night,
Whiche I to lovers yeve of right.
H sire, for Goddis love, seide I,
Er ye passe hens, ententifly
Your comaundementis to me ye say,
And I shal kepe hem, if I may;
for hem to kepen is al my thought.
And if so be I wot hem nought,
Than may I sinne unwittingly.
Wherfore I pray you enterly,
With al myn herte, me to lere,
That I trepasse in no manere.

TH god of love than chargid me
Anoon, as ye shal here and see,
Word by word, by right emprise,
So as the Romance shal devyse.
The maister lesith his tyme to lere,
Whan the disciple wol not here.
It is but veyn on him to swinke,
That on his lerning wol not thinke.
Whoso lust love, let him entende,
for now the Romance ginneth amende.
Now is good to here, in fay,
If any be that can it say.
And poynte it as the resoun is
Set; for othergate, ywis,
It shal nought wel in alle thing
Be brought to good undirstonding:
for a rede that poyntith ille
A good sentence may ofte spille.
The book is good at the ending,
Maad of newe and lusty thing;
for whoso wol the ending here,
The crafte of love he shal now lere,
If that he wol so long abyde,
Til I this Romance may unhilde,
And undo the signifaunce
Of this dreame into Romaunce.
The sothfastnesse that now is hid,
Without coverture shal be kid,
Whan I undon have this dreming,
Wherin no word is of lesing.
ALANY, at the biginning,
I wol, sayd Love, over alle thing,
Thou leve, if thou wolt not be
fals, and trespasse ageyns me.
I curse and blame generally
Alle hem that loven vilany;
for vilany makith vilayn,
And by his dedis a cherle is seyn.
Thise vilayns arn without pitee,
frendshipe, love, and al bounte.
I nil receyve to my servyse

The
Romaunt
of the
Rose

Hem that ben vilayns of emprise.
But undirstonde in thynt entent,
That this is not myn entement,
To clepe no wight in no ages
Only gentil for his linages.
But whoso that is vertuous,
And in his port nought outrageous,
Whan sich oon thou seest thee biforn,
Though he be not gentil born,
Thou mayst wel seyn, this is a soth,
That he is gentil, bicause he doth
As longeth to a gentilman;
Of hem non other deme I can.
for certeynly, withouten drede,
A cherl is demed by his dede,
Of hye or lowe, as ye may see,
Or of what kinrede that he be.
Ne say nought, for noon yvel wille,
Thing that is to holden stille;
It is no worship to misseye.
Thou mayst ensample take of Keye,
That was somtyme, for misseying,
Hated both of olde and ying;
As feras Gawayn, the worthy,
Was preyssed for his curtesy,
Keye was hated, for he was fel,
Of word dispitous and cruel.
Wherfore be wyse and aqueyntable,
Goodly of word, and resonable
Bothe to lesse and eek to mar.
And whan thou comest ther men ar,
Loke that thou have in custom ay
first to salve hem, if thou may:
And if it falle, that of hem som
Salve thee first, be not dom,
But quyte him curteisly anon
Without abiding, or they goon.

OR nothing eek thy tunge applye
To speke wordis of ribaudye.
To vilayn speche in no degree
Lat never thy lippe unbounden be.
for I nought holde him, in good feith,
Curteys, that foule wordis seith.
And alle wimmen serve and preyse,
And to thy power hir honour reyse.
And if that any missayere
Dispyse wimmen, that thou mayst here,
Blame him, and bidde him holde him stille.
And set thy might and al thy wille
Wimmen and ladies for to plesse,
And to do thing that may hem esse,
That they ever speke good of thee,
for so thou mayst best preyssed be.

OKe fro pryde thou kepe thee wele;
for thou mayst bothe perceyve and fele,
That pryde is bothe foly and sinne;
And he that pryde hath, him withinne,
Ne may his herte, in no wyse,
Meken ne souplen to servyse.
for pryde is founde, in every part,
Contrarie unto Loves art.
And he that loveth trewely
Shulde him contene jolily,

Withouten pryde in sondry wyse,
And him disgyssen in queyntyse,
for queynt array, withouten drede,
Is nothing proud, who takith hede;
for fresh array, as men may see,
Withouten pryde may ofte be.

MYNTENE thysilf aftir thy rent,
Of robe and eek of garnement;
for many sythe fair clothing
A man amendith in mich thing.
And loke alwey that they be shape,
What garnement that thou shalt make,
Of him that can hem beste do,
With al that perteyneth therto.
Doynthis and sleeves be wel sittand,
Right and straight upon the hand,
Of shoon and botes, newe and faire,
Loke at the leest thou have a paire;
And that they sitte so fetisly,
That these rude may uttirly
Merveye, sith that they sitte so pleyne,
How they come on or of ageyn.
Were streite gloves, with aumencere
Of silk; and alwey with good chere
Thou yeve, if thou have richesse;
And if thou have nought, spend the lesse.
Alwey be mery, if thou may,
But waste not thy good alway.
Have hat of floures fresh as May,
Chapelet of roses of Whitsunday;
for sich aray ne cost but lyte.
Thyn hondis wasshe, thy teeth make whyte,
And let no filthe upon thee be.
Thyn nailes blak if thou mayst see,
Voide it away deliverly,
And kembe thyn heed right jolily.
fard not thy visage in no wyse,
for that of love is not thempryse;
for love doth haten, as I finde,
A beaute that cometh not of kinde.

WLEY in herte I rede thee
Glad and mery for to be,
And be as joyful as thou can;
Love hath no joye of sorowful man.
That yvel is ful of curtesye
That lauhwith in his maladye;
for ever of love the siknesse
Is meynd with swete and bitternesse.
The sore of love is mervelous;
for now the lover is joyous,
Now can he pleyne, now can he grone,
Now can he singen, now maken mone.
To day he pleyne for hevinesse,
To morowe he pleyeth for jolynesse.
The lyf of love is ful contrarie,
Which stoundemele can ofte varie.
But if thou canst som mirthis make,
That men in gree wole gladly take,
Do it goodly, I comaunde thee;
for men sholde, whersoever they be,
Do thing that hem best sitting is,
for therof cometh good loos and pris.
Wherof that thou be vertuous,

Ne be not straunge ne dangerous.
OR if that thou good rider be,
Prike gladly, that men may se.
In armes also if thou conne,
Pursue, til thou a name hast wonne.

ND if thy voice be fair and clere,
Thou shalt maken no gret daungere
Whan to singe they goodly preye;
It is thy worship for to obeie.
Also to you it longith ay
To harpe and giterne, daunce and play;
for if he can wel foote and daunce,
It may him greetly do avaunce.
Among eek, for thy lady sake,
Songes and complayntes that thou make;
for that wol meve hem in hir herte,
Whan they reden of thy smerte.

OKe that no man for scarce thee holde,
for that may greve thee manyfolde.
Resoun wol that a lover be
In his yiftes more large and free
Than cherles that been not of loving.
for who therof can any thing,
he shal be leef ay for to yeve,
In Loves lore who so wolde leve;
for he that, through a godeyn sight,
Or for a kissing, anonright
Yaf hool his herte in wille and thought,
And to himsilf kepith right nought,
Aftir swich yift, is good resoun,
He yeve his good in abandoun.

Wol I shortly here reherce,
Of that that I have seid in verse,
Al the sentence by and by,
In wordis fewe compendiously,
That thou the bet mayst on hem
thinke,
Whether so it be thou wake or winke;
for that the wordis litel greve
A man to kepe, whanne it is breve.

WOSO with Love wol goon or ryde
He mot be curteys, and void of pryde,
Mery and fulle of jolite,
And of largesse alosed be.

FIRST I joyne thee, here in penaunce,
That ever, withoute repentaunce,
Thou set thy thought in thy loving,
To laste withoute repenting;
And thenke upon thy mirthis swete,
That shal folowe aftir whan ye mete.

ND for thou trewe to love shalt be,
I wol, and eek comaunde thee,
That in oo place thou sette, al hool,
Thyn herte, withouten halven dool,
for trecherie, in sikernesse;
for I lovede never doublesesse.
To many his herte that wol depart,
Everiche shal have but litel part.
But of him drede I me right nought,
That in oo place settith his thought.
Therefore in oo place it sette,
And lat it never thennes flette.
for if thou yvest it in tening,

I holde it but a wrecchid thing;
Therefore yeve it hool and quyte,
And thou shalt have the more merite.
If it be lent, than aftir soon,
The bountee and the thank is doon;
But, in love, free yeven thing
Requyrih a gret guerdoning.
Yeve it in yift al quit fully,
And make thy yift debonairly;
for men that yift wol holde more dere
That yeven is with gladsome chere.
That yift nought to preisen is
That man yeveth, maugre his.
Whan thou hast yeven thyn herte, as I
Have seid thee here al openly,
Than adventures shulle thee falle,
Which harde and hevy been withalle.
for ofte whan thou bithenkest thee
Of thy loving, wherso thou be,
fro folk thou must depart in hy,
That noon perceyve thy malady,
But hyde thyn harm thou must alone,
And go forth sole, and make thy mone.
Thou shalt no whyl be in oo stat,
But whylom cold and whylom hat;
Now reed as rose, now yelow and fade.
Such sorowe, I trowe, thou never hade;
Cotidien, ne yit quarteyne,
It is nat so ful of peyne.
for ofte tymes it shal falle
In love, among thy peynes alle,
That thou thyself, al hoolly,
foryeten shalt so utterly,
That many tymes thou shalt be
Stille as an image of tree,
Dom as a stoon, without stering
Of foot or hond, without speking.
Than, sone after al thy peyne,
To memorie shalt thou come ageyn,
As man abasshed wondre sore,
And after sighen more and more.
for wit thou wel, withouten wene,
In swich astat ful oft have been
That have the yvel of love assayd,
Wherthrough thou art so dismayd.
AFTER, a thought shal take thee so,
That thy love is to fer thee fro:
Thou shalt say: God, what may this be,
That I ne may my lady see?
Myn herte aloon is to her go,
And I abyde al sole in wo,
Departed fro myn owne thought,
And with myne eyen see right nought.
Alas, myn eyen sende I ne may,
My careful herte to convey!
Myn hertes gyde but they be,
I praise nothing whatever they see.
Shut they abyde thanne? nay;
But goon visyte without delay
That myn herte desyareth so.
for certeynly, but if they go,
A fool myself I may wel holde,
Whan I ne see what myn herte wolde.

Wherfore I wol gon her to seen,
Or esed shal I never been,
But I have som tokening.
WHEN gost thou forth without dwelling;
But ofte thou faylest of thy desyre,
Er thou mayst come hir any nere,
And wastest in vayn thy passage.
Than fastest thou in a newe rage;
for want of sight thou ginnest morne,
And homward pensif dost retorne.
In greet mischeef than shalt thou be,
for than agayn shal come to thee
Sighes and pleyntes, with newe wo,
That no icching prikketh so.
Who wot it nought, he may go lere
Of hem that byen love so dere.
Nothing thyn herte appesen may,
That oft thou wolt goon and assay,
If thou mayst seen, by aventure,
Thy lyves joy, thyn hertis cure;
So that, by grace if thou might
Atteyne of hir to have a sight,
Than shalt thou doon non other dede
But with that sight thyn eyen fede.
That faire fresh whan thou mayst see,
Thyn herte shal so ravished be,
That never thou woldest, thy thankis, lete,
Ne remove, for to see that swete.
The more thou seest in sothfastnesse,
The more thou coveytest of that swetnesse;
The more thyn herte brenneth in fyr,
The more thyn herte is in desyr.
for who considreth every del,
It may be lykned wondir wel,
The peyne of love, unto a fere;
for ever the more thou neigest nere
Thought, or whoso that it be,
for verray sothe I telle it thee,
The hatter ever shal thou brenne,
As experience shal thee kenne.
Wherso thou comest in any cost,
Who is next fyr, he brenneth most.
And yit forsothe, for al thyn hete,
Though thou for love swelte and swete,
Ne for nothing thou felen may,
Thou shalt not willen to passe away.
And though thou go, yet must thee nede
Thenke alday on hir fairhede,
Whom thou bihelde with so good wille;
And holde thysilf bigyled ille,
That thou ne haddest non hardement
To shewe hir ought of thyn entent.
Thyn herte ful sore thou wolt dispyse,
And eek repreve of cowardyse,
That thou, so dulle in every thing,
Were dom for drede, without speking.
Thou shalt eek thenke thou didest foly,
That thou were hir so faste by,
And durst not auntere thee to say
Somthing, er thou cam away;
for thou haddist no more wonne,
To speke of hir whan thou bigonne:
But yif she wolde, for thy sake,
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In armes goodly thee have take,
It shulde have be more worth to thee
Than of tresour greet plentee.
THUS shalt thou morne and eek compleyn,
And gete enchesoun to goon ageyn
Unto thy walk, or to thy place,
Where thou biheld hir fleshy face,
And never, for fals suspeccioun,
Thou woldest finde occasioun
for to gon unto hir hous.
So art thou thanne desirous
A sight of hir for to have,
If thou thine honour mightest save,
Or any erand mightist make
Thider, for thy loves sake;
ful fayn thou woldist, but for drede
Thou gost not, lest that men take hede.
Wherfore I rede, in thy going,
And also in thyn ageyn/coming,
Thou be wel war that men ne wit;
feyne thee other cause than it
To go that weye, or faste by;
To hele wel is no folye.
And if so be it happe thee
That thou thy love ther mayst see,
In siker wyse thou hir salewe,
Wherwith thy colour wol transmewe,
And eke thy blood shal al toquake,
Thyn hewe eek chaungen for hir sake,
But word and wit, with chere ful pale,
Shul wante for to telle thy tale.
And if thou mayst so ferforth winne,
That thou thy resoun durst biginne,
And woldist seyn three thingis or mo,
Thou shalt ful scarsly seyn the two.
Though thou bihenke thee never so wel,
Thou shalt foryete yit somdel,
But if thou dele with trecherye,
for fals lovers mowe al folye
Seyn, what hem lust, withouten drede,
They be so double in hir falshe;e;
for they in herte kunne thenke a thing
And seyn another, in hir speking.
And whan thy speche is endid al,
Right thus to thee it shal bifal;
If any word than come to minde,
That thou to seye hast left bihinde,
Than thou shalt brenne in greet martyr;
for thou shalt brenne as any fyr.
This is the stryfe and eke the affray,
And the batail that lastith ay.
This bargeyn ende may never take,
But if that she thy pees wil make.
AND whan the night is comen, anon
A thousand angres shal come upon.
To bedde as fast thou wolt thee dight,
Where thou shalt have but smal delyt;
for whan thou wenest for to slepe,
So ful of peyne shalt thou crepe,
Sterte in thy bedde aboute ful wyde,
And turne ful ofte on every syde;
Now downward groffe, and now upright,
And walowe in wo the longe night,

Thyne armis shalt thou sprede abrede,
As man in werre were forwerreyd.
Than shal thee come a remembraunce
Of hir shape and hir semblaunce,
Wherto non other may be pere.
And wite thou wel, withoute were,
That thee shal seme, somtyme that night,
That thou hast hir, that is so bright,
Naked bitwene thyn armes there,
As sothfastnesse as though it were.
Thou shalt make castels than in Spayne,
And drede of joye, al but in vayne,
And the delyten of right nought,
Whyl thou so slomrest in that thought,
That is so swete and delitable,
The which, in soth, nis but a fable,
for it ne shal no whyle laste.
Than shalt thou sighe and wepe faste,
And say: Dere God, what thing is this?
My drede is turned al amis,
Which was ful swete and apparent,
But now I wake, it is al shent!
Now yede this mery thought away!
Twenty tymes upon a day
I wolde this thought wolde come ageyn,
for it alleggith wel my peyn.
It makith me ful of joyful thought,
It sleeth me, that it lastith noght.
H, Lord! why nil ye me socoure,
The joye, I trowe, that I langoure?
The deth I wolde me shulde slo
Whyl I lye in hir armes two.
Myn harm is hard, withouten wene,
My greet unese ful ofte I mene.
But wolde Love do so I might
Have fully joye of hir so bright,
My peyne were quit me richely.
Alas, to greet a thing aske I!
It is but folye, and wrong wening,
To aske so outrageous a thing.
And whoso askith folily,
He moot be warned hastily;
And lne wot what I may say,
I am so fer out of the way;
for I wolde have ful gret lyking
And ful gret joye of lasse thing.
for wolde she, of hir gentilnesse,
Withouten more, me onis kesse,
It were to me a greet guerdoun,
Reles of al my passioun.
But it is hard to come therto;
Al is but folye that I do,
So high I have myn herte set,
Where I may no comfort get.
Inoot wher I sey wel or nought;
But this I wot wel in my thought,
That it were bet of hir aloon,
for to stinte my wo and moon,
A loke on me ycast goodly,
Chan for to have, al utterly,
Of another al hool the pley.
H, Lord! wher I shal byde the day
That ever she shal my lady be?

He is ful cured that may hir see.
H! God! whan shal the dawning spring?
To ly thus is an angry thing;
I have no joye thus here to ly
Whan that my love is not me by.
A man to lyen hath gret disese,
Which may not slepe ne reste in ese.
I wolde it dawed, and were now day,
And that the night were went away;
for were it day, I wolde upryse.
H! slowe sonne, shew thyn enpryse!
Speed thee to sprede thy bemis bright,
And chace the derknesse of the night,
To putte away the stoundes stronge,
Which in me lasten al to longe.
THIS night shalt thou contene so,
Withoute rest, in peyne and wo;
If ever thou knewe of love distresse,
Thou shalt mowe lerne in that siknesse.
And thus enduring shalt thou ly,
And ryse on morwe up erly
Out of thy bedde, and harneys thee
Er ever dawning thou mayst see.
Al privily than shalt thou goon,
What weder it be, thysilf aloon,
for reyn, or hayl, for snow, for slete,
Thider she dwellith that is so swete,
The which may falle aslepe be,
And thenkith but litel upon thee.
Than shalt thou goon, ful foule aferd;
Loke if the gate be unsperd,
And waite without in wo and peyn,
ful yvel acold in winde and reyn.
Than shalt thou go the dore bifore,
If thou maist fynde any score,
Or hole, or reft, whatever it were;
Than shalt thou stoupe, and lay to ere,
If they within aslepe be;
I mene, alle save thy lady free.
Whom waking if thou mayst aspye,
Go put thysilf in jupartye,
To aske grace, and thee bimene,
That she may wite, withouten wene,
That thou anight no rest hast had,
So sore for hir thou were bistad.
Wommen wel ought pite to take
Of hem that sorwen for hir sake.
And loke, for love of that relyke,
That thou thenke non other lyke,
for whom thou hast so greet annoy,
Shal kisse thee er thou go away,
And hold that in ful gret deyntee.
And, for that no man shal thee see
Bifore the hous, ne in the way,
Loke thou be goon ageyn er day.
Suche coming, and such going,
Such hevynesse, and such walking,
Makith lovers, withouten wene,
Under hir clothes pale and lene,
for Love leveth colour ne cleernesse;
Who loveth trewe hath no fatnesse.
Thou shalt wel by thyselfe see
That thou must nedis assayed be.

for men that shape hem other wey
falsly her ladies to bitray,
It is no wonder though they be fat;
With false othes hir loves they gat;
for oft I see suche losengeours
fatter than abbatis or priours.

NET with o thing I thee charge,
That is to seye, that thou be large
Unto the mayd that hir doth serve,
So best hir thank thou shalt deserve.
Yeve hir yiftes, and get hir grace,
for so thou may hir thank purchase,
That she thee worthy holde and free,
Thy lady, and alle that may thee see.

Also hir servautes worshiþe ay,
And plesse as mucche as thou may;
Gret good through hem may come to thee,
Bicause with hir they been prive.
They shal hir telle how they thee fand
Curteis and wys, and wel doand,
And she shal preysse thee wel the mare.
Loke out of londe thou be not fare;
And if such cause thou have, that thee
Bihoveth to gon out of contree,
Leve hool thyn herte in hostage,
Til thou ageyn make thy passage.
Thenk long to see the swete thing
That hath thyn herte in hir keeping.

NOW have I told thee, in what wyse
A lover shal do me servyse.
Do it than, if thou wolt have
The mede that thou aftir crave.

WHAN Love al this had boden me,
I seide him: Sire, how may it be
That lovers may in such manere
Endure the peyne ye have seid here?
I merveyle me wonder faste,
How any man may live or laste

In such peyne, and such brenning,
In sorwe and thought, and such sighing,
Ay unrelesed wo to make,
Whether so it be they slepe or wake.
In such annoy continually,
As helpe me God, this merveile I,
How man, but he were maad of stele,
Might live a month, such peynes to fele.

THE God of Love than seide me:
Freend, by the feith I owe to thee,
May no man have good, but he it by.

A man loveth more tendirly
The thing that he hath bought most dere.
for wite thou wel, withouten were,
In thank that thing is taken more,
for which a man hath suffred sore.
Certis, no wo ne may atteyne
Unto the sore of loves peyne.
Non yvel therto ne may amounte,
No more than a man may counte
The dropes that of the water be.
for drye as wel the grete see
Thou mightist, as the harmes telle
Of hem that with Love dwelle
In servyse; for peyne hem sleeth,

And that ech man wolde fle the deeth,
And trowe they shulde never escape,
Nere that hope couthe hem make
Glad as man in prisoun set,
And may not geten for to et
But barly/breed, and watir pure,
And lyeth in vermin and in ordure;
With alle this, yit can he live,
Good hope such comfort hath him yive,
Which maketh wene that he shal be
Delivered and come to liberte;
In fortune is his fulle trust.
Though he lye in strawe or dust,
In hope is al his susteyning.

AND so for lovers, in hir wening,
Whiche Love hath shit in his prisoun;
Good Hope is hir salvacioun.
Good Hope, how sore that they smerte,
Yeveth hem bothe wille and herte
To profre hir body to martyre;
for Hope so sore doth hem desyre
To suffre ech harm that men devyse,
for joye that aftir shal aryse.
Hope, in desire to cacche victorie;
In Hope, of love is al the glorie,
for Hope is al that love may yive;
Nere Hope, ther shulde no lover live,
Blessid be Hope, which with desyre
Avaunceth lovers in such manere.
Good Hope is curteis for to plesse,
To kepe lovers from al disese.
Hope kepith his lond, and wolabyde,
for any peril that may betyde;
for Hope to lovers, as most cheef,
Doth hem endure al mischeef;
Hope is her help, whan mister is,
And I shal yeve thee eek, ywis,
Three other thingis, that greet solas
Doth to hem that be in my las.

THE firste good that may be founde,
To hem that in my lace be bounde,
Is Swete Thought, for to recorde
Thing wherwith thou canst accorde
Best in thyn herte, wher she be;
Thought in absence is good to thee.

Whan any lover doth compleyne,
And liveth in distresse and peyne,
Than Swete Thought shal come, as blyve,
Awey his angre for to dryve.
It makith lovers have remembraunce
Of comfort, and of high plesaunce,
That Hope hath hight him for to winne.
for Thought anoon than shal biginne,
As fer, God wot, as he can finde,
To make a mirroure of his minde;
for to biholde he wol not lette.
Hir person he shal afore him sette,
Hir laughing eyen, persaunt and clere,
Hir shape, hir fourme, hir goodly chere,
Hir mouth that is so gracious,
So swete, and eek so saverous;
Of alle hir fetures he shal take heede,
His eyen with alle hir limes fede.

THAS Swete, thenking shal aswage
The peyne of lovers, and hir rage.
Thy joye shal double, withoute gesse,
Whan thou thenkist on hir semlinessse,
Or of hir laughing, or of hir chere,
That to thee made thy lady dere;
This comfort wol I that thou take;
And if the next thou wolt forsake
Which is not lesse saverous,
Thou shuldist been to dangerous.

THE secunde shal be Swete Speche,
That hath to many oon be leche,
To bringe hem out of wo and were,
And helpe many a bachilere;
And many a lady sent socoure,
That have loved par amour,
Through speking, whan they mighten here
Of hir lovers, to hem so dere.

To hem it voidith al hir smerte,
The which is closed in hir herte.
In herte it makith hem glad and light,
Speche, whan they mowe have sight.
And therfore now it cometh to minde,
In olde dawes, as I finde,
That clerkis writen that hir knewe,
Ther was a lady fresh of hewe,
Whiche of hir love made a song
On him for to remembre among,
In which she seide: Whan that I here
Speken of him that is so dere,
To me it voidith al my smerte,
Ywis, he sit so nere myn herte.
To speke of him, at eve or morwe,
It cureth me of al my sorwe.
To me is noon so high plesaunce
As of his persone daliaunce.

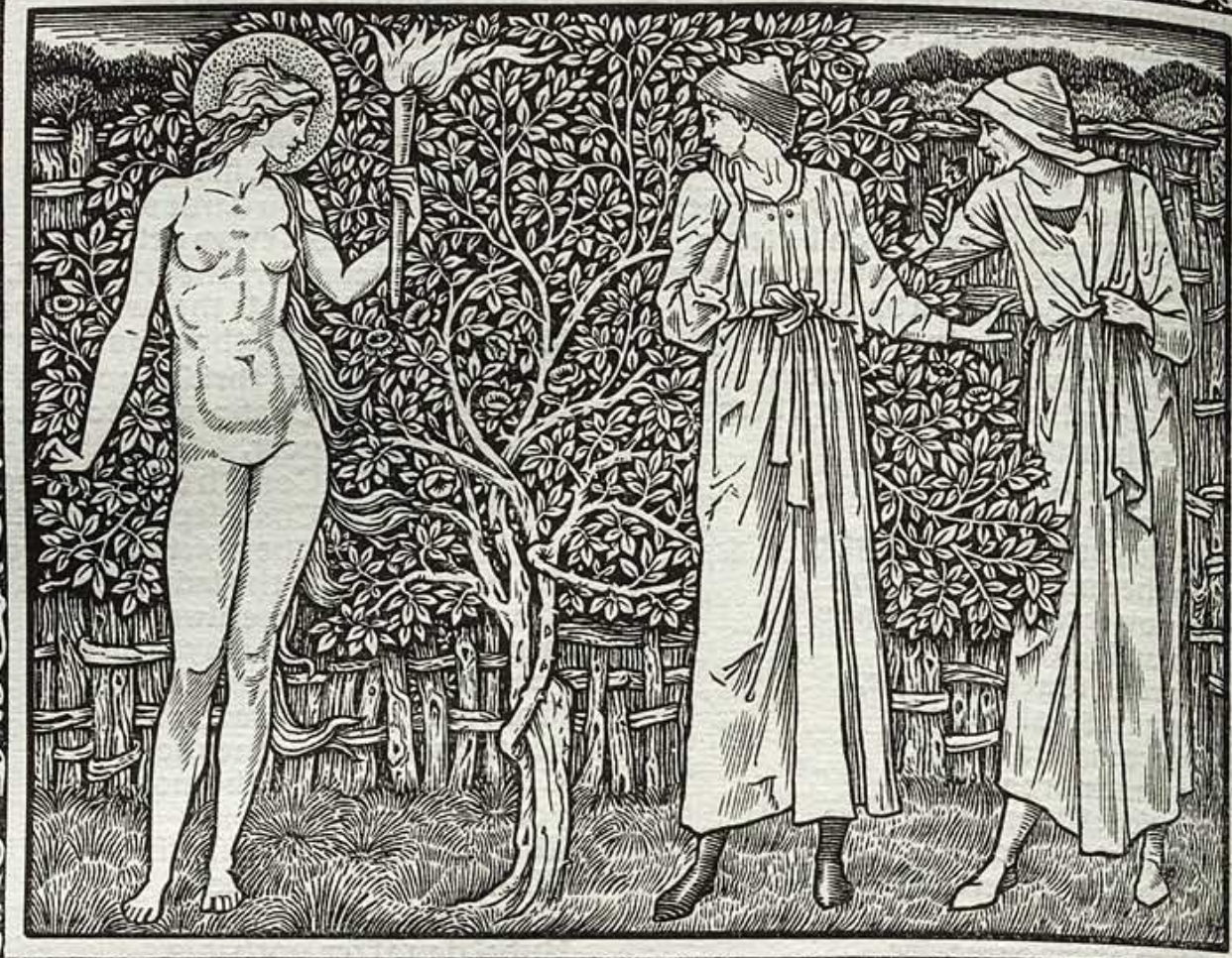
She wist ful wel that Swete Speking
Comfortith in ful mucche thing.
Hir love she had ful wel assayed,
Of him she was ful wel apayed;
To speke of him hir joye was set.
Therfore I rede thee that thou get
A felowe that can wel concele
And kepe thy counsel, and wel hele,
To whom go shewe hoolly thyn herte,
Bothe wele and wo, joye and smerte:
To gete comfort to him thou go,
And privily, bitween yow two,
Ye shal speke of that goodly thing,
That hath thyn herte in hir keeping;
Of hir beaute and hir semblaunce,
And of hir goodly countenaunce.
Of al thy state thou shalt him sey,
And aske him counseil how thou may
Do any thing that may hir plesse;
for it to thee shal do gret ese,
That he may wite thou trust him so,
Bothe of thy wele and of thy wo.
And if his herte to love be set,
His compaignie is mucche the bet,
for resoun wol, he shewe to thee
Al uttirly his privite;
And what she is he loveth so,

To thee pleyntly he shal undo,
Withoute drede of any shame,
Bothe telle hir renoun and hir name.
Than shal he forther, ferre and nere,
And namely to thy lady dere,
In siker wyse; ye, every other
Shal helpen as his owne brother,
In trouthe withoute doublenesse,
And kepen cloos in sikernesse,
for it is noble thing, in fay,
To have a man thou darst say
Thy prive counsel every del;
for that wol comfort thee right wel,
And thou shalt holde thee wel apayed,
Whan such a freend thou hast assayed.

THE thridde good of greet comfort
That yeveth to lovers most dis-
port,
Comith of sight and biholding,
That clepid is Swete Loking,
The which may noon ese do,

Whan thou art fer thy lady fro;
Wherfore thou prese alwey to be
In place, where thou mayst hir se.
for it is thing most amorous,
Most delitable and saverous,
for to aswage a mannes sorowe,
To sene his lady by the morowe.
for it is a ful noble thing
Whan thyn eyen have meting
With that relyke precious,
Wherof they be so desirous.
But al day after, soth it is,
They have no drede to faren amis,
They dreden neither wind ne reyn,
Ne yit non other maner peyn.
for whan thyn eyen were thus in blis,
Yit of hir curtesye, ywis,
Aloon they can not have hir joye,
But to the herte they it convoye;
Part of hir blis to him they sende,
Of al this harm to make an ende.
The eye is a good messangere,
Which can to the herte in such manere
Tidyingis sende, that he hath seen,
To voide him of his peynes cleen.
Wherof the herte rejoyseth so
That a gret party of his wo
Is voided, and put away to flight.
Right as the derknesse of the night
Is chased with clerenesse of the mone,
Right so is al his wo ful sone
Devoided clene, whan that the sight
Biholden may that fresshe wight
That the herte desyareth so,
That al his derknesse is ago;
for than the herte is al at ese,
Whan they sene that that may hem plesse.

NOW have I thee declared al out,
Of that thou were in drede and dout;
for I have told thee feithfully
What thee may curen utterly,
And alle lovers that wole be



feithful, and ful of stabilite.
Good hope alwey kepe by thy syde,
And swete thought make eek abyde,
Swete looking and swete speche;
Of alle thyng harmes they shal be leche.
Of every thou shalt have greet plesaunce;
If thou canst byde in sufferaunce,
And serve wel without feyntise,
Thou shalt be quit of thyng empryse,
With more guerdoun, if that thou live;
But al this tyme this I thee yive.

U HE God of Love whan al
the day
Had taught me, as ye have
herd say,
And enfourmed compen-
diously,
He vanished away al sodeynly,
And I alone lefte, al sole,
So ful of compleynt and of dole,
for I saw no man ther me by.
My woundes me greved wondirly;
Me for to curen nothing I knew,
Save the botoun bright of hew,
Wheron was set hoolly my thought;
Of other comfort knew I nought,
But it were through the God of Love;
I knew nat elles to my bihove

That might me ese or comfort gete,
But if he wolde him entremete.

T HE roser was, withoute doute,
Closed with an hegge withoute,
As ye toforn have herd me seyn;
And fast I bisied, and wolde fayn
Have passed the hage, if I might
Have gotten in by any slight
Unto the botoun so fair to see.
But ever I dradde blamed to be,
If men wolde have suspeccioun
That I wolde of entencioun
Have stole the roses that ther were;
Therefore to entre I was in fere.
But at the last, as I bithought
Whether I sholde passe or nought,
I saw come with a gladd chere
To me, a lusty bachelere,
Of good stature, and of good hight,
And Bialacoil forsothe he hight. **Bialacoil**
Sone he was to Curtesy,
And he me graunted ful gladly
The passage of the outer hay,
And seide: Sir, how that ye may
Passe, if it your wille be,
The fresshe roser for to see,
And ye the swete savour fele.
Your warrant may I be right wele;



So thou thee kepe fro folye,
Shal no man do thee vilanye.
If I may helpe you in ought,
I shal not feyne, dredeth nought;
for I am bounde to your servyse,
fully devoide of feyntise.

W HAN unto Bialacoil saide I:
I thank you, sir, ful hertely,
And your bihest I take at gree,
That ye so goodly profer me;
To you it cometh of greet fraunchyse,
That ye me profer your servyse.
Than aftir, ful deliverly,
Through the breres anon wente I,
Wherof encombred was the hay.
I was wel plesed, the soth to say,
To see the botoun fair and swote,
So fresshe spronge out of the rote.
And Bialacoil me served wel,
Whan I so nygh me mighte fele
Of the botoun the swete odour,
And so lusty hewed of colour.

B UT than a cherl, foule him bityde!
Bisayde the roses gan him hyde,
To kepe the roses of that roser,
Of whom the name was Daunger. **Daunger**
This cherl was hid there in the greves,
Covered with graspe and with leves,

To spye and take whom that he fond
Unto that roser putte an hond.
He was not sole, for ther was mo;
for with him were other two
Of wikkid maners, and yvel fame. **Wikkid/
Tonge**
That oon was clepid, by his name,
Wikkid Tonge, God yeve him sorwe!
for neither at eve, ne at morwe,
He can of no man no good speke;

On many a just man doth he wreke.
Ther was a womman eek, that hight
Shame, that, who can reken right, **Shame**
Trespas was hir fadir name,
Hir moder Resoun; and thus was Shame
On lyve brought of these ilk two.
And yit had Trespas never ado
With Resoun, ne never ley hir by,
He was so hidous and ugly,
I mene, this that Trespas hight;
But Resoun conceyvet, of a sight,
Shame, of that I spak afor. **Chastitee**

A ND whan that Shame was thus born,
It was ordeyned, that Chastitee
Shulde of the roser lady be,
Which, of the botouns more and las,
With sondry folk assailed was,
That she ne wiste what to do,
for Venus hir assailith so.

That night and day from hir she stal
Botouns and roses over al.
To Resoun than prayeth Chastitee,
Whom Venus flemed over the see,
That she hir doughter wolde hir lene,
To kepe the roser fresh and grene.
Anoon Resoun to Chastitee
Is fully assented that it be,
And grauntid hir, at hir request,
That Shame, bicause she is honest,
Shal keper of the roser be.
And thus to kepe it ther were three,
That noon shulde hardy be ne bold,
Were he yong, or were he old,
Ageyn hir wille away to bere
Botouns ne roses, that ther were.
I had wel sped, had I not been
Hwayted with these three, and seen.
for Bialacoil, that was so fair,
So gracious and debonair,
Quitte him to me ful curteisly,
And, me to plesse, bad that I
Shuld drawe me to the botoun nere;
Prese in, to touche the rosere
Which bar the roses, he yaf me leve;
This graunt ne might but litel greve.
And for he saw it lyked me,
Right nygh the botoun pullede he
A leef al grene, and yaf me that,
The which ful nygh the botoun sat;
I made me of that leef ful queynt.
And whan I felte I was aqueynt
With Bialacoil, and so prive,
I wende al at my wille had be.

BIALCOIL wex I hardy for to tel
To Bialacoil how me bifel
Of Love, that took and wounded me.
And seide: Sir, so mote I thee,
I may no joye have in no wyse,
Upon no syde, but it ryse;
for sithe, if I shal not feyne,
In herte I have had so gret peyne,
So gret annoy, and such affray,
That I ne wot what I shal say;
I drede your wrath to disserve.
Lever me were, that knyves kerve
My body shulde in pecis smalle,
Than in any wyse it shulde falle
That ye wratthed shulde been with me.
Sey boldely thy wille, quod he,
I nil be wroth, if that I may,
for nought that thou shalt to me say.
Thanne seide I: Sir, not you displese
To knowen of my greet unese,
In which only Love hath me brought;
for peynes greet, disese and thought,
fro day to day he doth me drye;
Supposeth not, sir, that I lye.
In me fyve woundes dide he make,
The sore of whiche shal never slake
But ye the botoun graunte me,
Which is most passaunt of beautee,
My lyf, my deth, and my martyre,
And tresour that I most desyre.

BIALCOIL, affrayed all,
Seyde: Sir, it may not fall;
That ye desire, it may not ryse.
What? wolde ye shende me in this wyse?
A mochel foole than I were,
If I suffrid you away to bere
The fresh botoun, so fair of sight,
for it were neither skile ne right
Of the roser ye broke the rind,
Or take the rose aforn his kind;
Ye ar not courteys to aske it.
Lat it stil on the roser sit,
And growe til it amended be,
And parfitly come to beaute.
I nolde not that it pulled wer
fro the roser that it ber,
To me it is so leef and dere.

WHICH that sterte out anoon Daungere,
Out of the place where he was hid,
His malice in his chere was kid;
ful greet he was, and blak of hewe,
Sturdy and hidous, whoso him knewe;
Like sharp urchouns his here was growe,
His eyes rede as the fire glow;
His nose frounced ful kirked stood,
He com criand as he were wood,
And seide: Bialacoil, tel me why
Thou bringest hider so boldly
him that so nygh is the roser?
Thou worchist in a wrong maner;
He thenkith to dishonour thee,
Thou art wel worthy to have maugree
To late him of the roser wit;
Who serveth a feloun is yvel quit.
Thou woldist have doon greet bountee,
And he with shame wolde quyte thee.
flee hennes, felowe! I rede thee go!
It wanteth litel I wol thee slo;
for Bialacoil ne knew thee nought,
Whan thee to serve he sette his thought;
for thou wolt shame him, if thou might,
Bothe ageyn resoun and right.
I wol no more in thee affye,
That comest so slyghly for tespye;
for it preveth wonder wel,
Thy slight and tresoun every del.

DURST no more ther make abode,
for the cherl, he was so wode;
So gan he threten and manace,
And thurgh the haye he did me chace,
for feer of him I tremblid and quook,
So cherlishly his heed he shook;
And seide, if eft he might me take,
I shulde not from his hondis scape.

BIALCOIL is fled and mate,
And I al sole, disconsolate,
Was left aloon in peyne and thought;
for shame, to deth I was nygh brought.
Than thought I on myn high foly,
How that my body, utterly,
Was yve to peyne and to martyre;
And therto hadde I so gret yre,
That I ne durst the hayes passe;
Ther was non hope, ther was no grace.



I trowe never man wiste of peyne,
But he were laced in Loves cheyne;
Ne no man wot, and sooth it is,
But if he love, what anger is.
Love holdith his heest to me right wele,
Whan peyne he seide I shulde fele.
Non herte may thenke, ne tunge seyne,
A quarter of my wo and peyne.
I might not with the anger laste;
Myn herte in poynt was for to braste,
Whan I thought on the rose, that so
Was through Daunger cast me froo.

ALONG whyl stood I in that
state,
Til that me saugh so mad and
mate
The lady of the highe ward,
Which from hir tour lokid
thiderward.
Resoun men clepe that lady, **Resoun**
Which from hir tour deliverly
Come down to me withouten more.
But she was neither yong, ne hore,
Ne high ne low, ne fat ne lene,
But best, as it were in a mene.
hir eyen two were cleer and light
As any candel that brenneth bright;

And on hir heed she hadde a crown.
hir semede wel an high persoun;
for rounde enviroon, hir crownet
Was ful of riche stonis fret.
hir goodly semblaunt, by devys,
I trowe were maad in paradys;
Nature had never such a grace,
To forge a werk of such compace.
for certeyn, but the letter lye,
God himsilf, that is so high,
Made hir afir his image,
And yaf hir sith sich avauntage,
That she hath might and seignorye
To kepe men from al folye;
Whoso wole trowe hir lore,
Ne may offenden nevermore.

AND whyl I stood thus derk and pale,
Resoun bigan to me hir tale;
She seide: Al hayl, my swete frend!
folly and childhood wol thee shend,
Which thee have put in greet affray;
Thou hast bought dere the tyme of May,
That made thyn herte mery to be.
In yvel tyme thou wentist to see
The gardin, wherof Ydilnesse
Bar the keye, and was maistresse
Whan thou yedest in the daunce

With hir, and haddest aqueyntaunce:
Hir aqueyntaunce is perilous,
first softe, and aftirward noyous;
She hath thee trashed, withoute ween;
The God of Love had thee not seen,
Ne hadde Ydillesse thee conveyed
In the verger where Mirthe him played.
If foly have supprised thee,
Do so that it recovered be;
And be wel war to take no more
Counsel, that greveth aftir sore;
He is wys that wol himsilf chastyse.
And though a young man in any wyse
Trespasse among, and do foly,
Lat him not tarye, but hastily
Lat him amende what so be mis.
And eek I counseile thee, ywis,
The God of Love hoolly foryet,
That hath thee in sich peyne set,
And thee in herte tormented so.
I can nat seen how thou mayst go
Other weyes to garrisoun;
for Daunger, that is so felon,
felly purposith thee to werrey,
Which is ful cruel, the soth to sey.
And yit of Daunger cometh no blame,
In reward of my doughter Shame,
Which hath the roses in hir warde,
As she that may be no musarde.
And Wikked/Tunge is with these two,
That suffrih no man thider go;
for er a thing be do, he shal,
Where that he cometh, over al,
In fourty places, if it be sought,
Seye thing that never was doon ne wrought;
So moche tresoun is in his male,
Of falsnesse for to feyne a tale.
Thou delest with angry folk, ywis;
Wherfor to thee it bettir is
from these folk away to fare,
for they wol make thee live in care.
This is the yvel that Love they calle,
Wherin ther is but foly alle,
for love is foly everydel;
Who loveth, in no wyse may do wel,
Ne sette his thought on no good werk.
His scole he leith, if he be clerk;
Of other craft eek if he be,
He shal not thryve therin; for he
In love shal have more passioun
Than monke, hermyte, or chanoun.
The peyne is hard, out of mesure,
The joye may eek no whyl endure;
And in the possessioun
Is muche tribulacioun;
The joye it is so short/lasting,
And but in happe is the geting;
for I see ther many in travaille,
That atte laste foule fayle.
I was nothing thy counselor,
Whan thou were maad the homager
Of God of Love to hastily;
Ther was no wisdom, but foly.

Thyn herte was joly, but not sage,
Whan thou were brought in sich a rage,
To yelde thee so redily,
And to Love, of his gret maistry.
I rede thee Love away to dryve,
That makith thee recche not of thy lyve.
The foly more fro day to day
Shal growe, but thou it putte away.
Take with thy teeth the bridel faste,
To daunte thyn herte; and eek thee caste,
If that thou mayst, to gete defence
for to redresse thy first offence.
Whoso his herte alwey wol leve,
Shal finde among that shal him greve.

WHAN I hir herd thus me chastyse,
I answerd in ful angry wyse.
I prayed hir cessen of hir speche,
Outher to chastyse me or teche,
To bidde me my thought refreyne,
Which Love hath caught in his demeyne:
What? wene ye Love wol consent,
That me assailith with bowe bent,
To draw myn herte out of his bonde,
Which is so quikly in his bonde?
That ye counsayle, may never be;
for whan he first arested me,
He took myn herte so hool him til,
That it is nothing at my wil;
he taughte it so him for to obey,
That he it sparred with a key.
I pray yow lat me be al stille,
for ye may wel, if that ye wille,
Your wordis waste in idillesse;
for utterly, withouten gesse,
Al that ye seyn is but in veyne.
Me were lever dye in the peyne,
Than Love to meward shulde arette
falsheed, or tresoun on me sette.
I wol me gete prys or blame,
And love trewe, to save my name;
Who me chastysith, I him hate.

WITH that word Resoun wente hir gate,
Whan she saugh for no sermoning
She might me fro my foly bring.
Than dismayed, I lefte al sool,
forwery, forwandred as a fool,
for I ne knew no chevisaunce.
Than fel into my remembraunce,
How Love bade me to purveye
A felowe, to whom I mighte seye
My counsel and my privete,
for that shulde muche availle me.
With that bithought I me, that I
hadde a felowe faste by,
Trewe and siker, curteys, and hend,
And he was called by name a freend;
A trewer felowe was nowher noon.
In haste to him I wente anon,
And to him al my wo I tolde,
fro him right nought I wold withholde.
I tolde him al withoute were,
And made my compleynt on Daungere,
How for to see he was hidous,

And to meward contrarious;
The whiche through his cruelte
Was in poynt to have meyned me;
With Bialacoil whan he me sey
Within the gardyn walke and pley,
fro me he made him for to go,
And I bilefte aloon in wo;
I durst no longer with him speke,
for Daunger seide he wolde be wreke,
Whan that he sawe how I wente
The freshe botoun for to hente,
If I were hardy to come near
Bitwene the hay and the roser.

HIS freend, whan he wiste of my thought,
He discomforted me right nought,
But seide: felowe, be not so mad,
Ne so abaysshed nor bistad.
Myself I knowe ful wel Daungere,
And how he is feers of his chere,
At prime temps, Love to manace;
ful ofte I have ben in his caas.
A felon first though that he be,
Aftir thou shalt him souple see.
Of long passed I knew him wele;
Ungoodly first though men him fele,
He wol meek aftir, in his bering.
I shal thee telle what thou shalt do:
Meekly I rede thou go him to,
Of herte pray him specially
Of thy trespasse to have mercy,
And hote him wel, him here to plesse,
That thou shalt nevermore him displese.
Who can best serve of flattery,
Shal plesse Daunger most uttirly.

Freend hath seid to me so wel,
That he me esid hath somdel.
And eek allegged of my torment;
for through him had I hardement
Again to Daunger for to go,
To preve if I might meke him so.

Daunger cam I, al ashamed,
The which afor me hadde blamed,
Desyring for to pese my wo;
But over hegge durst I not go,
for he forbad me the passage.
I fond him cruel in his rage,
And in his hond a gret burdoun.
To him I knelid lowe adoun,
fulmeke of port, and simple of chere,
And seide: Sir, I am comen here
Only to aske of you mercy.
That greveth me, sir, ful gretly
That ever my lyf I wratthed you,
But for to amende I am come now,
With al my might, bothe loude and stille,
To doon right at your owne wille;
for Love made me for to do
That I have trespassed hidirto;
fro whom I ne may withdrawe myn herte;
Yit shal I never, for joy ne smerte,
What so bifalle, good or ille,
Offende more ageyn your wille.

Lever I have endure disece
Than do that shulde you displese.
I you require and pray, that ye
Of me have mercy and pitee,
To stinte your yre that greveth so,
And I wol swere for evermo
To be redressid at your lyking,
If I trespasse in any thing;
Save that I pray thee graunte me
A thing that may nat warned be,
That I may love, al only;
Non other thing of you aske I.
I shal doon elles wel, ywis,

If of your grace ye graunte me this.
And ye ne may not letten me,
for wel wot ye that love is free,
And I shal loven, sith that I wil,
Whoever lyke it wel or il;
And yit ne wold I, for al fraunce,
Do thing to do you displesaunce.

Daunger fil in his entent
for to foryeve his maltalent;
But al his wratthe yit at laste
He hath releed, I preyde so faste:

Shortly he seide: Thy request
Is not to mochel dishonest;
Ne I wol not werne it thee,
for yit nothing engreveth me,
for though thou love thus evermore,
To me is neither softe ne sore.
Love wher thee list; what recchith me,
So thou fer fro my roses be?
Trust not on me, for noon assay,
In any time to passe the hay.

Thus hath he graunted my prayere.

Daunger wente I forth, withouten were,
Unto my freend, and tolde him al,
Which was right joyful of my tale.

He seide: Now goth wel thyn affaire,
He shal to thee be debonaire.
Though he afor was dispitous,
He shal heeraftir be gracious.
If he were touchid on som good veyne,
He shuld yit rewen on thy peyne.
Suffre, I rede, and no boost make,
Til thou at good mes mayst him take.
By suffraunce, and by wordis softe,
A man may overcomen ofte
him that afor he hadde in drede,
In bookis sothly as I rede.

HUS hath my freend with gret comfort
Avaunced me with high disport,
Which wolde me good as mich as I.
And thanne anon ful sodeynly
I took my leve, and streight I went
Unto the hay; for gret talent
I had to seen the fresh botoun,
Wherin lay my salvacioun;
And Daunger took kepe, if that I
Kepe him covenaut trewly.
So sore I dradde his manasing,
I durst not breken his bidding;
for, lest that I were of him shent,

The
Romaunt
of the
Rose

I brak not his comaundement,
for to purchase his good wil.
It was hard for to come thertil,
his mercy was to fer bihinde;
I wepte, for I ne might it finde.
I compleyned and sighed sore,
And languissched evermore,
for I durst not over go
Unto the rose I loved so.
Thurghout my deming outerly,
Than had he knowlege certeinly,
That Love me ladde in sich a wyse,
That in me ther was no feyntyse,
falsheed, ne no trecherye,
And yit he, ful of vilanye,
Of disdeyne, and cruelte,
On me ne wolde have pite,
his cruel wil for to refreyne,
Though I wepe alwey, and compleyne.

WHILE I was in this torment,
were come of grace, by God
sent,
fraunchyse, and with hir Pite
fulfild the botoun of bountee.
They go to Daunger anon/right

To forther me with al hir might,
And helpe in worde and in dede,
for wel they saugh that it was nede.
first, of hir grace, dame fraunchyse
hath taken word of this emprise:

SHE seide: Daunger, gret wrong ye do
To worche this man so muche wo,
Or pynen him so angerly;

It is to you gret vilany.
I can not see why, ne how,
That he hath trespassed ageyn you,
Save that he loveth; wherfore ye shulde
The more in cherete of him holde.
The force of love makith him do this;
Who wolde him blame he dide amis?
He leseth more than ye may do;
his peyne is hard, ye may see, lo!
And Love in no wyse wolde consente
That he have power to repente;
for though that quik ye wolde him sloo,
fro Love his herte may not go.
Now, swete sir, is it your ese
him for to angre or disese?
Allas, what may it you avaunce
To doon to him so greet grevaunce?
What worship is it agayn him take,
Or on your man a werre make,
Sith he so lowly every wyse
Is redy, as ye lust devyse?
If Love hath caught him in his lace,
You for tobye in every caas,
And been your suget at your wille,
Shulde ye therfore willen him ille?
Ye shulde him spare more, about,
Than him that is bothe proud and stout.
Curtesye wol that ye socour
hem that ben meke undir your cure.
his herte is hard, that wole not meke,

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Whan men of mekenesse him biseke.

THAT is certeyn, seide Pite;
We see ofte that humilitee
Bothe ire, and also felonye
Venquissbeth, and also melancolye;
To stonde forth in such duresse,
This crueltee and wikkednesse.
Wherfore I pray you, sir Daungere,
for to mayntene no lenger here
Such cruel werre agayn your man,
As hoolly youres as ever he can;
Nor that ye worchen no more wo
On this caytif that languissbeth so,
Which wol no more to you trespassse,
But put him hoolly in your grace,
his offense ne was but lyte;
The God of Love it was to wyte,
That he your thral so gretly is,
And if ye harm him, ye doon amis;
for he hath had ful hard penaunce,
Sith that ye refte him thaquentytaunce
Of Bialacoil, his moste joye,
Which alle his peynes might acowe.
He was biforn anoyed sore,
But than ye doubled him wel more;
for he of blis hath ben ful bare,
Sith Bialacoil was fro him fare.
Love hath to him do greet distresse,
He hath no nede of more duresse.
Voideth from him your ire, I rede;
Ye may not winnen in this dede.
Makith Bialacoil repaire ageyn,
And haveth pite upon his peyn;
for fraunchyse wol, and I, Dite,
That merciful to him ye be;
And sith that she and I accorde,
Have upon him misericorde;
for I you pray, and eek moneste,
Nought to refusen our requeste;
for he is hard and fel of thought,
That for us two wol do right nought.

DAUNGER ne might no more endure,
He meked him unto mesure,
I wol in no wyse, seith Daungere,
Denye that ye have asked here;
It were to greet uncurtesye.
I wol ye have the companye
Of Bialacoil, as ye devyse;
I wol him letten in no wyse.

To Bialacoil than wente in hy
fraunchyse, and seide ful curteisly:
Ye have to longe be deignous
Unto this lover, and dangerous,
fro him to withdrawe your presence,
Which hath do to him grete offence,
That ye not wolde upon him see;
Wherfore a sorowful man is he.
Shape ye to paye him, and to plesse,
Of my love if ye wol have ese.
fulfil his wil, sith that ye knowe
Daunger is daunted and brought lowe
Thurgh help of me and of Pite;
You thar no more afered be.

ISHAL do right as ye wil,
Saith Bialacoil, for it is skil.
Sith Daunger wol that it so be.

BIALACOIL at the beginning
Salued me in his coming.
No straungenes was in him seen,
No more than he ne had wrathed been.
As faire semblaunt than shewed he me,
And goodly, as aforid did he;
And by the honde, withouten doute,
Within the haye, right al aboute
He ladde me, with right good chere,
He enwiron the vergere,
That Daunger had me chased fro.
Now have I leve overal to go;
Now am I raised, at my devys,
fro helle unto paradys.
Thus Bialacoil, of gentilnesse,
With alle his peyne and besinesse,
Hath shewed me, only of grace,
The estres of the swote place.

SHAL the rose, whan I was nigh,
Was gretter woxen, and more high,
Fresh, rody, and faire of hewe,

Of colour ever pliche newe.
And whan I had it longe seen,
I saugh that through the leves grene
The rose spredde to spanishing;
To sene it was a goodly thing.
But it ne was so spred on brede,
That men within might knowe the sede;
for it covert was and enclose
Bothe with the leves and with the rose.
The stalk was even and grene upright,
It was theron a goodly sight;
And wel the better, withouten wene,
for the seed was not ysene.
ful faire it spradde, God it blesse!
for suche another, as I gesse,
Aforne ne was, ne more vermayle.
I was abawed for merveyle,
for ever, the fairer that it was,
The more I am bounden in Loves laas.

WHONNE I abood there, soth to

saye,
Til Bialacoil I gan to praye,
Whan that I sawe him in no wyse
To me warnen his servyse,
That he me wolde graunte a thing,
Which to remembre is wel sitting;
This is to sayne, that of his grace
he wolde me yewe leyser and space
To me that was so desirous
To have a kissing precious
Of the goodly freshe rose,
That swetely smelleth in my nose;
for if it you displesed nought,
I wolde gladly, as I have sought,
Have a cos therof freely
Of your yeff; for certeinly
I wol non have but by your leve,
So loth me were you for to greve.

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HE sayde: frend, so God me spede,
Of Chastite I have suche drede,
Thou shuldest not warned be for me,
But I dar not, for Chastite.
Agayn hir dar I not misdo,
for alwey biddeth she me so
To yewe no lover leve to kisse;
for who therto may winnen, ywis,
he of the surplus of the pray
May live in hope to get som day,
for who so kissing may attayne,
Of loves peyne hath, soth to sayne,
The beste and most avenaunt,
And earnest of the remenaunt.

Of his answer I syghed sore;
I durst assaye him tho no more,
I had such drede to greve him ay.
A man shulde not to muche assaye
To chafe his frend out of mesure,
Nor put his tyf in aventure;

for no man at the firste stroke
Ne may nat felle down an oke;
Nor of the reisis have the wyne,
Til grapes rype and wel afyne
Be sore empressid, I you ensure,
And drawn out of the pressure.
But I, forpeyned wonder stronge,
Thought that I abood right longe
Aftir the kis, in peyne and wo,
Sith I to his desyred so:

Til that, rewing on my distresse,
Ther to me Venus the goddesse,
Which ay werreyeth Chastite,
Came of hir grace, to socoure me,
Whos might is knowe fer and wyde,
for she is modir of Cupyde,
The God of Love, blinde as stoon,
That helpith lovers many oon.
This lady brought in hir right hond
Of brenning fyr a blasing brond;
Wherof the flawme and hote fyr
hath many a lady in desyr
Of love brought, and sore het,
And in hir servise hir hertes set.

THIS lady was of good entayle,
Right wondirful of apparayle;
By hir atyre so bright and shene,
Men might perceyve wel, and sene,
She was not of religioun.

Nor I nil make mencion
Nor of hir robe, nor of tresour,
Of broche, nor of hir riche attour;
Ne of hir girdil aboute hir syde,
for that I nil not long abyde.
But knowith wel, that certeynly
She was arayed richely.

Devyd of pryde certeyn she was.

O Bialacoil she wente a pas,
And to him shortly, in a clause,
She seide: Sir, what is the cause
Ye been of port so dangerous
Unto this lover, and deynous,
To graunte him nothing but a kis?

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The
Romaunt
of the
Rose

Venus

To werne it him ye doon amis;
Sith wel ye wote, how that he
Is Loves servaunt, as ye may see,
And hath beaute, wherthrough he is
Worthy of love to have the blis.
How he is semely, biholde and see,
How he is fair, how he is free,
How he is swote and debonair,
Of age yong, lusty, and fair.
Ther is no lady so hauteyne,
Duchesse, countesse, ne chasteleyne,
That I holde hir ungoodly
for to refuse him outerly.
His breeth is also good and swete,
And eke his lippis rody, and mete
Only to pleyen, and to kisse.
Graunte him a kis, of gentillesse!
His teeth are also whyte and clene;
Me thinkith wrong, withouten wene,
If ye now werne him, trustith me,
To graunte that a kis have he;
The lasse to helpe him that ye haste,
The more tyme shul ye waste.

HAN the flawme of the verry brond,
That Venus brought in hir right hond,
Had Bialacoil with hete smete,
Anoon he bad, withouten lette,
Graunte to me the rose kisse.
Than of my peyne I gan to lisse,
And to the rose anoon wente I,
And kisset it ful feithfully.
Thar no man aske if I was blythe,
Whan the savour softe and lythe
Strook to myn herte withoute more,
And me alegged of my sore,
So was I ful of joye and blisse.
It is fair sich a flour to kisse,
It was so swote and saverous.
I might not be so anguissous,
That I mote glad and joly be,
Whan that I remembre me.
Yit ever among, sothly to seyn,
I suffre noye and moche peyn.

HE see may never be so stil,
That with a litel winde it nil
Overwhelme and turne also,
As it were wood, in wawis go.
Aftir the calm the trouble sone
Mot folowe, and chaunge as the mone.
Right so farith Love, that selde in oon
Holdith his anker; for right anoon
Whan they in ese wene best to live,
They been with tempest al fordrive.
Who serveth Love, can telle of wo;
The stoundemele joye mot overgo.
Now he hurteth, and now he cureth,
for selde in oo poynt Love endureth.
Now is it right me to procede,
How Shame gan medle and take hede,
Thurgh whom felle angres I have had;
And how the stronge wal was maad,
And the castell of brede and lengthe,
That God of Love wan with his strengthe.

At this in romance wil I sette,
And for nothing ne wil I lette,
So that it lyking to hir be,
That is the flour of beaute;
for she may best my labour quyte,
That I for hir love shal endyte.

WIKKID/TUNGE, that the covyne
Of every lover can devyne
Worst, and addith more somdel,
for Wikkid/Tunge seith never wel,
To meward bar he right gret hate,
Espying me erly and late,
Til he hath seen the grette chere
Of Bialacoil and me yfere.
He mighte not his tunge withstonde
Worse to reporte than he fonde,
He was so ful of cursed rage;
It sat him wel of his linage,
for him an Irish womman bar.
His tunge was fyled sharp, and squar,
Doignant and right kerving,
And wonder bitter in speking.
for whan that he me gan espie,
He swoor, affirming sikirly,
Bitwene Bialacoil and me
Was yvel aquayntaunce and privee.
He spak therof so folily,
That he awakid jelousy;
Which, al affrayed in his rysing,
Whan that he herde him jangling,
He ran anoon, as he were wood,
To Bialacoil ther that he stood;
Which hadde lever in this caas
Have been at Reynes or Amyas;
for foot/hoot, in his felonye
To him thus seide Jelousye:

WH Y hast thou been so negligent,
To kepen, whan I was absent,
This verger here left in thy ward?
To me thou haddist no reward,
To truste, to thy confusioun,
Him thus, to whom suspeccioun
I have right greet, for it is nede;
It is wel shewed by the dede.
Greet faute in thee now have I founde;
By God, anoon thou shalt be bounde,
And faste loken in a tour,
Withoute refuyt or socour.
for Shame to long hath be thee fro;
Over sone she was agoo.
Whan thou hast lost bothe drede and fere,
It semed wel she was not here.
She was not bisy, in no wyse,
To kepe thee and to chastyse,
And for to helpen Chastitee
To kepe the roser, as thinkith me,
for than this boy/knave so boldely
Ne sholde not have be hardy,
Ne in this verger had such game,
Which now me turneth to gret shame.

BIALACOIL nist what to sey;
ful fayn he wolde have fled away,
for fere han hid, nere that he

Alacodyntly took him with me.
And whan I saugh he hadde so,
This Jelousye, take us two,
I was astoned, and knew no rede,
I fledde away for verrey drede.
HAN Shame cam forth ful simply;

She wende have trespaced ful gretly;
Humble of hir port, and made it simple,
Wering a vayle in stede of wimple,
Anoonis doon in hir abbey.
Bicause hir herte was in affray,
She gan to speke, within a throwe,
To Jelousye, right wonder lowe.
First of his grace she bisought,
And seide: Sire, ne leveth nought
Wikkid/Tunge, that fals espie,
Which is so glad to feyne and lye.
He hath you maad, thurgh flatering,
On Bialacoil a fals lesing.
His falsnesse is not now anew,
It is to long that he him knew.
This is not the firste day;
for Wikkid/Tunge hath custom ay
for Wikkid/Tunge to beweye,
Yonge folkis to beweye.
And false lesinges on hem leye.
Yit nevertheles I see among,
That the loigne it is so longe
Of Bialacoil, hertis to lure,
In Loves servise for to endure,
Drawing suche folk him to,
That he had nothing with to do;
But in sothnesse I trowe nought,
That Bialacoil hadde ever in thought
To do trespass or vilanye;
But, for his modir Curtesye
Hath taught him ever for to be
Good of aquayntaunce and privee;
for he loveth non hevinessse,
But mirthe and pley, and al gladnesse;
He hateth alle trecherous,
Soleyn folk and envious;
for wel ye witen how that he
Wol ever glad and joyful be
Honestly with folk to pley.
I have be negligent, in good fey,
To chastise him; therefore now I
Of herte crye you here mercy,
That I have been so recheles
To tamen him, withouten lees.
Of my foly I me repente;
Now wol I hool sette myn entente
To kepe, bothe loude and stille,
Bialacoil to do your wille.
SHAME, Shame, seyde Jelousy,
To be bitrashed gret drede have I.
Lecherye hath clombe so hie,
That almost blered is myn ye;
No wonder is, if that drede have I.
Overal regnith Lechery,
Whos might yit growith night and day.
Bothe in cloistre and in abbey
Chastite is werreyed overal.
Therefore I wol with sikir wal

Close bothe roses and roser.
I have to longe in this maner
Left hem unclosid wilfully;
Wherfore I am right inwardly
Sorrowful and repente me.
But now they shal no lenger be
Unclosid; and yit I drede sore,
I shal repente ferthermore,
for the game goth al amis.
Counsel I mot take newe, ywis.
I have to longe tristed thee,
But now it shal no lenger be;
for he may best, in every cost,
Disceyve, that men tristen most.
I see wel that I am nygh shent,
But if I sette my ful entent
Remedye to purveye.
Therefore close I shal the weye
fro hem that wol the rose espie,
And come to wayte me vilanye,
for, in good feith and in trouthe,
I wol not lette, for no slouthe,
To live the more in sikirnesse,
To make anoon a fortresse,
To enclose the roses of good savour.
In middis shal I make a tour
To putte Bialacoil in prisoun,
for ever I drede me of tresoun.
I trowe I shal him kepe so,
That he shal have no might to go
About to make companye
To hem that thenke of vilanye;
Ne to no such as hath ben here
Afor, and founde in him good chere,
Which han assailed him to shende,
And with hir trowandysse to blende.
A fool is eyth for to bigyle;
But may I lyve a litel while,
He shal forthenke his fair semblaunt.

AND with that word cam Drede avaunt,
Which was abasshed, and in gret fere,
Whan he wiste Jelousye was there.
He was for Drede in such affray,
That not a word durste he say,
But quaking stood ful stille aloon,
Til Jelousye his wey was goon,
Save Shame, that him not forsook;
Bothe Drede and she ful sore quook;
Til that at laste Drede abreyde,
And to his cosin Shame seyde:
Shame, he seide, in sothfastnesse,
To me it is gret hevinessse,
That the noyse so fer is go,
And the sclandre of us two.
But sith that it is so bifalle,
We may it not ageyn do calle,
Whan onis sprongen is a fame,
for many a yeer withouten blame
We han been, and many a day;
for many an April and many a May
We han ypassed, not ashamed,
Til Jelousye hath us blamed
Of mistrust and suspeccioun

Causeles, withouten enchesoun.
Go we to Daunger hastily,
And late us shewe him openly,
That he hath not aright ywrought,
Whan that he sette nought his thought
To kepe better the purpryse;
In his doing he is not wyse.
He hath to us ydo gret wrong,
That hath suffred now so long
Bialacoil to have his wille,
Alle his lustes to fulfille.
He must amende it utterly,
Or ellis shal he vilaynly
Exyled be out of this londe;
for he the werre may not withstonde
Of Jalousye, nor the greif,
Sith Bialacoil is at mischeef.
WO Daunger, Shame and Drede anoon
The righte wey ben bothe agoon.
The chert they founden hem afor
Ligging undir an hawethorn.
Undir his heed no pilowe was,
But in the stede a trusse of gras.
He slombred, and a nappe he took,
Til Shame pitously him shook,
And greet manace on him gan make.
Why slepist thou whan thou shulde wake?
Quod Shame; thou dost us vilanye!
Who tristith thee, he doth folye,
To kepe roses or botouns.
Whan they ben faire in hir sesouns.
Thou art worxe to familiere
Where thou shulde be straunge of chere,
Stout of thy port, redy to greve.
Thou dost gret foly for to leve
Bialacoil herein, to calle
The yonder man to shenden us alle.
Though that thou slepe, we may here
Of Jalousie gret noyse here.
Art thou now late? ryse up in hy,
And stoppe sone and deliverly
Alle the gappis of the hay;
Do no favour, I thee pray.
It fallith nothing to thy name
Make fair semblaunt, where thou maist blame.
If Bialacoil be swete and free,
Dogged and fel thou shuldist be;
froward and outrageous, ywis;
A chert chaungeth that curteis is.
This have I herd ofte in seying,
That man ne may, for no daunting,
Make a sperhauke of a bosarde.
Alle men wole holde thee for musarde,
That debonair have founden thee;
It sit thee nought curteis to be;
To do men plesaunce or servyse,
In thee it is recreaundyse.
Let thy werkis, fer and nere,
Be lyke thy name, which is Daungere.
WHAN, at abawid in shewing,
Anoon spak Drede, right thus seying,
And seide: Daunger, I drede me
That thou ne wolt not bisy be

To kepe that thou hast to kepe;
Whan thou shuldist wake, thou art aslepe.
Thou shalt be greved certeynly
If thee aspye Jalousy,
Or if he finde thee in blame.
He hath today assailed Shame,
And chased away, with gret manace,
Bialacoil out of this place,
And swereth shortly that he shal
Enclose him in a sturdy wal;
And al is for thy wikkednesse,
for that thee faileth straungenesse.
Thyn herte, I trowe, be failed al;
Thou shalt repente in special,
If Jalousye the sothe knewe;
Thou shalt forthenke, and sore rewe.
WITH that the chert his clubbe gan shake,
Frowning his eyen gan to make,
And hidous chere; as man in rage,
for ire he brente in his visage.
Whan that he herde him blamed so,
He seide: Out of my wit I go;
To be discomfit I have gret wrong.
Certis, I have now lived to long,
Sith I may not this closer kepe;
At quik I wolde be dolven depe,
If any man shal more repeire
Into this garden, for foule or faire.
Myn herte for ire goth afere,
That I lete any entre here.
I have do foly, now I see,
But now it shal amended bee.
Who settith foot here any more,
Truly, he shal repente it sore;
for no man mo into this place
Of me to entre shal have grace.
Lever I hadde, with swerdis tweyne
Thurghout myn herte, in every veyne
Perced to be, with many a wounde,
Than slouthe shulde in me be founde.
from hennesforth, by night or day,
I shal defende it, if I may,
Withouten any excepcioun
Of ech maner condicioun;
And if I any man it graunte,
Holdeth me for recreaunte.
Than Daunger on his feet gan stonde,
And hente a burdoun in his honde.
Wroth in his ire, ne lefte he nought,
But thurgh the verger he hath sought.
If he might finde hole or trace,
Wherthurgh that men mot forthby pace,
Or any gappe, he dide it close,
That no man mighte touche a rose
Of the roser al aboute;
He shitteth every man withoute.
Thus day by day Daunger is wers,
More wondirful and more divers,
And feller eek than ever he was;
for him ful oft I singe Allas!
for I ne may nought, thurgh his ire,
Recover that I most desire.
Myn herte, allas, wol brest atwo,

for Bialacoil I wratthed so.
for certeynly, in every membre
I quake, whan I me remembre
Of the botoun, which that I wolde
fulle ofte a day seen and biholde.
And whan I thenke upon the kisse,
And how muche joye and blisse
I hadde thurgh the savour swete,
for wante of it I grone and grete.
Me thenkith I fele yit in my nose
The swete savour of the rose.
And now I woot that I mot go
So fer the fresshe floures fro,
To me ful welcome were the deeth;
Absens therof, allas, me sleeth!
for whylom with this rose, allas,
I touched nose, mouth, and face;
But now the deeth I must abyde.
But Love consente, another tyde,
That onis I touche may and kisse,
I trowe my peyne shal never lisse.
Theron is al my covetyse,
Which brent myn herte in many wyse.
WHAN shal repaire agayn sighinge,
Long wacche on nightis, and no slepinge;
Thought in wisshing, torment, and wo,
With many a turning to and fro,
That half my peyne I can not telle.
for I am fallen into helle
from paradys and welthe, the more
My turment greveth; more and more
Anyeth now the bittimesse,
That I toform have felt swetesne.
And wikkid Tunge, thurgh his falsshede,
Causeth al my wo and drede.
On me he leyeth a pitous charge,
Because his tunge was to large.
NO it is tyme, shortly that I
Telle you somthing of
Jalousy,
That was in gret suspe-
cioun.
Aboute him lefte he no
masoun,
That stoon coude leye, ne
querroure;
He hired hem to make a tour.
And first, the roses for to kepe,
Aboute hem made he a diche depe,
Right wondir large, and also brood;
Upon the whiche also stood
Of squared stoon a sturdy wal,
Which on a cragge was founded al,
And right gret thiknesse eek it bar.
Abouten, it was founded squar,
An hundred fadome on every syde,
It was al liche longe and wyde.
Lest any tyme it were assayled,
fulwel aboute it was batayled;
And rounde environ eek were set
ful many a riche and fair touret.
At every corner of this wal
Was set a tour ful principal;

And everich hadde, withoute fable,
A porte/colys defensable
To kepe of enemies, and to greve,
That there hir force wolde preve.
AND eek amidde this purpryse
Was maad a tour of gret maistryse;
A fairer saugh no man with sight,
Large and wyde, and of gret might.
They ne dredde noon assaut
Of ginne, gunne, nor skaffaut.
for the temprure of the mortere
Was maad of licour wonder dere;
Of quikke lyme persant and egre,
The which was tempred with vinegre.
The stoon was hard as adement,
Wherof they made the foundement.
The tour was rounde, maad in compas;
In al this world no richer was,
Ne better ordeigned therwithal.
BOUTE the tour was maad a wal,
So that, bitwixt that and the tour,
Rosers were set of swete savour,
With many roses that they bere.
AND eek within the castel were
Springoldes, gunnes, bows, archers;
And eek above, atte corners,
Men seyn over the walle stonde
Grete engynes, whiche were nigh honde;
And in the kernels, here and there,
Of arblasters gret plentee were.
Noon armure might hir stroke withstonde,
It were foly to prece to honde.
Without the diche were listes made,
With walles batayled large and brade,
for men and hors shulde not atteyne
To neigh the diche over the pleyne.
THIS Jalousye hath environ
Set aboute his garnisoun
With walles rounde, and diche depe,
Only the roser for to kepe.
And Daunger eek, erly and late
The keyes kepte of the utter gate,
The which openeth toward the eest.
And he hadde with him atte leest
Thritty servautes, echon by name.
THAT other gate kepte Shame,
Which openede, as it was couth,
Toward the parte of the south.
Sergeautes assigned were
hir to
ful many, hir wille for to do.
WHAN Drede hadde in hir baillye
The keping of the conestabliere,
Toward the north, I undirstonde,
That opened upon the left honde,
The which for nothing may be sure,
But if she do hir bisy cure
Erly on morowe and also late,
Strongly to shette and barre the gate.
Of every thing that she may see
Drede is aferd, wherso she be;
for with a puff of litel winde
Drede is astonied in hir minde.

Therefore, for steling of the rose,
I rede hir nought the yate uncloze.
A foulis flight wol make hir flee,
And eek a shadowe, if she it see.

WHANNE Wikked Tunge, ful of
envye,
With soudiours of Normandye,
As he that causeth al the bate,
Was keper of the fourthe gate,
And also to the tother three

He went ful ofte, for to see.
Whan his lot was to wake anight,
His instrumentis wolde he dight,
for to blowe and make soun,
Ofter than he hath enchesoun;
And walken oft upon the wal,
Corners and wikkettis overal
ful narwe serchen and espye;
Though he nought fond, yet wolde he lye.
Discordaunt ever fro armonye,
And distoned from melodye,
Controve he wolde, and foule fayle,
With hornpyes of Cornewayle.
In floytes made he discordaunce,
And in his musik, with mischaunce,
He wolde seyn, with notes newe,
That he ne fond no womman trewe,
Ne that he saugh never, in his lyf,
Unto hir husbonde a trewe wyf;
Ne noon so ful of honestee,
That she nil laughe and mery be
Whan that she hereth, or may espye,
A man speken of lecherye.
Everich of hem hath somme vyce;
Oon is dishonest, another is nyce;
If oon be ful of vilanye,
Another hath a likerous ye;
If oon be ful of wantonnesse,
Another is a chideresse.

WHANNE Wikked Tunge, God yeve him shame!
Can putte hem everichone in blame
Withoute desert and causeles;
He lyeth, though they been gyltles.
I have pite to seen the sorwe,
That waketh bothe eve and morwe,
To innocents doth such grevaunce;
I pray God yeve him evel chaunce,
That he ever so bisy is
Of any womman to seyn amis!

EK Jalousye God con-
fonde,
That hath ymaad a tour so
rounde,
And made aboute a gari-
soun
To sette Bialacoil in pri-
soun;
The which is shet there in
the tour,
ful longe to holde there sojour,
There for to liven in penaunce.
And for to do him more grevaunce,
Ther hath ordeyned Jalousye

An olde vekke, for to espye
The maner of his governaunce;
The whiche devel, in hir enfaunce,
Had lerned muche of Loves art,
And of his pleyes took hir part;
She was expert in his servyse.
She knewe ech wrenche and every gyse
Of love, and every loveres wyle,
It was the harder hir to gyle.

Of Bialacoil she took ay hede,
That ever he liveth in wo and drede.
He keppe him coy and eek privee,
Lest in him she hadde see

Any foly countenaunce,
for she knewe al the olde daunce.
And aftir this, whan Jalousye
Had Bialacoil in his baillie
And shette him up that was so free,
for seure of him he wolde be,
He trusteth sore in his castel;
The stronge werk him lyketh wel.
He dradde nat that no glotouns
Shulde stele his roses or botouns.
The roses weren assured alle,
Defenced with the stronge walle.

OF Jalousye ful wel may be
Of drede devoid, in libertee,
Whether that he slepe or wake;
for of his roses may noon be take.

AT I, allas, now morne shal;
Bicause I was without the wal,
ful moche dole and mone I made.
Who hadde wist what wo I hadde,
I trowe he wolde have had pitee.
Love to deere had sold to me

The good that of his love hadde I.
I wende a bought it al queyntly;
But now, thurgh doubling of my peyn,
I see he wolde it selle ageyn,
And me a newe bargeyn lere,
The which alout the more is dere,
for the solace that I have lorn,
Than if I hadde it never afor.
Certayn I am ful lyk, indeed,
To him that cast in erthe his seed;
And hath joie of the newe spring,
Whan it greneth in the ginning,
And is also fair and fresh of flour,
Lusty to seen, swote of odour;
But er he it in sheves shere,
May falle a weder that shal it dere,
And maken it to fade and falle,
The stalk, the greyn, and floures alle;
That to the tilier is fordone
The hope that he hadde to sone.
I drede, certeyn, that so fare I;
for hope and travaile sikerly
Ben me biraft al with a storm;
The floure nil seden of my corn.
for Love hath so avaunced me,
Whan I bigan my privitee
To Bialacoil al for to telle,
Whom I ne fond froward ne felle,

But took agree al hool my play.
But Love is of so hard assay,
That al at onis he reved me,
Whan I wend best aboven have be.
It is of Love, as of fortune,
That chaungeth ofte, and nil contune;
Which whylom wol on folke smyle,
And gloume on hem another whyle;
Now freend, now foo, thou shalt hir fele,
for in a twinkling tourneth hir whele.

She can wrythe hir heed away,
This is the concours of hir pley;
She can areyse that doth morne,
And whirle adown, and overturne
Whos sittith bieghst, al as hir list;
A fool is he that wol hir trist.
for it am I that am com doun
Thurgh change and revolucoun!
Sith Bialacoil mot fro me twinne,
Shet in the prisoun yond withinne,
His absence at myn herte I fele;
for al my joye and al myn hele
Was in him and in the rose,
That but yon wal, which him doth close,
Open, that I may him see,
Love nil not that I cured be
Of the peynes that I endure,
Nor of my cruel aventure.

BIALACOIL, myn owne dere!
Though thou be now a prisonere,
Kepe atte leste thy herte to me,
And suffre not that it daunted be;
Ne lat not Jalousye, in his rage,
Putten thy herte in no servage.

Although he chastice thee withoute,
And make thy body unto him loute,
Have herte as hard as dyamaunt,
Stedefast, and nought pliaunt;
In prisoun though thy body be,
At large kepe thy herte free.
A trewe herte wol not plye
for no manace that it may drye.
If Jalousye doth thee payne,
Quyete him his whyle thus agayne,
To venge thee, atte leest in thought;
If other way thou mayest nought;
And in this wyse sotilly
Worche, and winne the maistry.
But yet I am in gret affray
Lest thou do not as I say;
I drede thou canst me greet maugree,
That thou imprisoned art for me;
But that is not for my trespas,
for thurgh me never discovered was
Yit thing that oughte be secrete.
Wel more any ther is in me,
Than is in thee, of this mischaunce;
for I endure more hard penaunce
Than any man can seyn or thinke,
That for the sorwe almost I sinke.
Whan I remembre me of my wo,
ful nygh out of my wit I go.
Inward myn herte I fele blede,

for comfortles the deeth I drede.
Ow I not wel to have distresse,
Whan false, thurgh hir wikkednesse,
And traitours, that am envyous,
To noyen me be so coragious?

A BIALACOIL, ful wel I see,
That they hem shape to disceyve thee,
To make thee buxom to hir lawe,
And with hir corde thee to drawe
Wherso hem lust, right at hir wil;
I drede they have thee brought thertil.
Withoute comfort, thought me sleeth;
This game wol bringe me to my deeth.
for if your gode wille I lese,
I mote be deed; I may not chese.
And if that thou foryete me,
Myn herte shal never in lyking be;
Nor elleswhere finde solace,
If I be put out of your grace,
As it shal never been, I hope;
Than shulde I fallen in wanhope.

Here ends the work of Guillaume de Lorris; and
begins the work of Jean de Meun.

AL LHS, in wanhope?... nay, pardee!
for I wol never dispeired be.
If Hope me faile, than am I
Ungracious and unworthy;
In Hope I wol comforted be,
for Love, whan he bitaught hir me,

Seide, that Hope, wherso I go,
Shulde ay be relees to my wo.
But what and she my balis bete,
And be to me curteis and swete?
She is in nothing ful certeyn.
Lovers she put in ful gret peyn,
And makith hem with wo to dele.
Hir fair biheest disceyveth fele,
for she wol bihote, sikirly,
And failen aftir outrely.
Al that is a ful noyous thing!
for many a lover, in loving,
Hangeth upon hir, and trusteth fast,
Whiche lese hir travel at the last.
Of thing to comen she woot right nought;
Therefore, if it be wysly sought,
Hir counseille, foly is to take.
for many tymes, whan she wol make
A ful good silogisme, I drede
That aftirward ther shal in dede
folwe an evel conclusioun;
This put me in confusioun,
for many tymes I have it seen,
That many have bigyled been,
for trust that they have set in Hope,
Which fel hem aftirward aslope.

BUT natheles yet, gladly she wolde,
That he, that wol him with hir holde,
Hadde alle tymes his purpos clere,
Withoute deceyte, or any were.
That she desireth sikirly;
Whan I hir blamed, I did foly.
But what avayleth hir good wille,
Whan she ne may staunche my wounde ille?

That helpith litel, that she may do,
Outake biheest unto my wo.
And heeste certeyn, in no wyse,
Withoute yift, is not to pryse.
Whan heest and deed asundir varie,
They doon me have a gret contrarie.

WHAS am I possed up and down
With dool, thought, and confusioun;
Of my disese ther is no noumbre.
Daunger and Shame me encumbre,
Drede also, and Jelousye,
And Wikked/Tunge, ful of envye,
Of whiche the sharpe and cruel ire
ful oft me put in gret martire.
They han my joye fully let,
Sith Bialacoil they have bishet
fro me in prisoun wikkidly,
Whom I love so entierly,
That it wol my bane be,
But I the soner may him see.
And yit moreover, wurst of alle,
Ther is set to kepe, foule hir bifalle!
A rimpel vekke, fer ronne in age,
frowning and yelowe in hir visage,
Which in awayte lyth day and night,
That noon of hem may have a sight.
Now moot my sorwe enforced be.

AL soth it is, that Love yaf me
Three wonder yiftes of his grace,
Which I have lorn now in this place,
Sith they ne may, withoute drede,
Helden but litel, who taketh hede.
for here availleth no Swete Thought,
And Swete Speche helpith right nought.
The thridde was called Swete Loking,
That now is lorn, without lesing.
The yiftes were fair, but not forthy
They helpe me but simply,
But Bialacoil may loosed be,
To gon at large and to be free.
for him my lyf lyth al in dout,
But if he come the rather out.
Alas! I trowe it wol not been!
for how shuld I evermore him seen?
He may not out, and that is wrong,
Bicause the tour is so strong.
How shulde he out? by whos prowesse,
Out of so strong a forteresse?
By me, certeyn, it nil be do;
God woot, I have no wit therto!
But wel I woot I was in rage,
Whan I to Love dide homage.

WHAS was in cause, in sothfastnesse,
But hirsilf, dame Idelnesse,
Which me conveyed, thurgh fair prayere,
To entre into that fair vergere?
She was to blame me to leve,
The which now doth me sore greve.
A foolis word is nought to trowe,
Ne worth an appel for to lowe;
Men shulde him snibbe bittirly,
At pryme temps of his foly.
I was a fool, and she me leved,

Thurgh whom I am right nought releved,
She accomplisshed al my wil,
That now me greveth wondir il,
Resoun me seide what shulde falle.
A fool mysilf I may wel calle,
That love asyde I had not leyde,
And trowed that dame Resoun seyde.
Resoun had bothe skile and right,
Whan she me blamed, with al hir might,
To medle of love, that hath me shent;
But certeyn now I wol repent.

AND shulde I repent? Nay parde!
A fals traitour than shulde I be.
The develles engins wolde me take,
If I my lorde wolde forsake,
Or Bialacoil falsly bitraye.
Shulde I at mischeef hate him? nay,
Sith he now, for his curtesye,
Is in prisoun of Jelousye.
Curtesye certeyn dide he me,
So muche, it may not yolden be,
Whan he the hay passen me lete,
To kisse the rose, faire and swete;
Shulde I therfore cunne him maugree?
Nay, certeynly, it shal not be;
for Love shal never, if God wil,
Here of me, thurgh word or wil,
Offence or complaynt, more or lesse,
Neither of Hope nor Idilnesse;
for certis, it were wrong that I
Hated hem for hir curtesye.

Ther is not ellis, but suffre and thinke,
And waken whan I shulde winke;
Abyde in hope, til Love, thurgh chaunce,
Sende me socour or allegeaunce,
Expectant ay til I may mete
To geten mercy of that swete.
Whylom I thinke how Love to me
Seyde he wolde taken atte gree
My servise, if unpacience
Caused me to doon offence.
He seyde: In thank I shal it take,
And high maister eek thee make,
If wikkednesse ne reve it thee;
But sone, I trowe, that shal not be.

THESSE were his wordis by and by;
It semed he loved me trewly.
Now is ther not but serve him wele,
If that I thinke his thank to fele.
My good, myn harm, lyth hool in me;
In Love may no defaute be;
for trewe Love ne failid never man.
Sothly, the faute mot nedis than
As God forbede! be founde in me,
And how it cometh, I can not see.
Now lat it goon as it may go;
Whether Love wol socoure me or slo,
He may do hool on me his wil.
I am so sore bounde him til,
from his servyse I may not fleen;
for tyf and deth, withouten wene,
Is in his hand; I may not chese;
He may me do bothe winne and lese.

And sith so sore he doth me greve,
Yit if my lust he wolde acheve
To Bialacoil goodly to be,
I were no force what felle on me.
for though I dye, as I mot nede,
I praye Love, of his goodlibede,
To Bialacoil do gentillesse,
for whom I live in such distresse,
That I mote deyen for penaunce.
But first, withoute repentaunce,
I wol me confesse in good entent,
And make in haste my testament,
As lovers doon that felen smerte:
To Bialacoil leve I myn herte
Al hool, withoute departing,
Or doublesse of repenting.

Coment Raisoun vient a L'amant.

WHAS as I made my passage
In complaynt, and in cruel
rage,
And I not wher to finde a
leche
That couthe unto myn
helping eche,
Sodeynly agayn comen
doun
Out of hir tour I saugh

Resoun,
Discrete and wys, and ful plesant,
And of hir porte ful avenant.
The righte wey she took to me,
Which stood in gret perplexite,
That was possched in every side,
That I nist wher I might abyde,
Chil she, demurely sad of chere,
Seide to me as she com nere:

MY owne freend, art thou yit greved?
How is this quarel yit acheved
Of Loves syde? Anoon me telle;
Hast thou not yit of love thy fille?
Art thou not wery of thy servyse?
That thee hath pyned in sich wyse?
What joye hast thou in thy loving?
Is it swete or bitter thing?
Canst thou yit chese, lat me see,
What best thy socour mighte be?
Thou servest a ful noble lord,
That maketh thee thral for thy reward,
Which ay reneweth thy turment,
With foly so he hath thee blent.
Thou felle in mischeef thilke day,
Whan thou didest, the sothe to say,
Obeysaunce and cek homage;
Thou wroughtest nothing as the sage.
Whan thou bicam his liege man,
Thou didist a gret foly than;
Thou wistest not what fel therto,
With what lord thou haddist to do.
If thou haddist him wel knowe,
Thou haddist nought be brought so lowe;
for if thou wistest what it were,
Thou noldist serve him half a yeer,

Not a weke, nor half a day,
Ne yit an hour withoute delay,
Ne never han loved paramours,
His lordship is so ful of shoures.
Knowest him ought?

L'Amaunt. Ye, dame, parde!

Raisoun. Nay, nay.

L'Amaunt. Yes, I.

Raisoun. Wherof, lat see?

L'Amaunt. Of that he seyde I shulde be

Glad to have sich lord as he,

And maister of sich seignory.

Raisoun. Knowist him no more?

L'Amaunt. Nay, certis, I.

Save that he yaf me rewles there,

And wente his wey, I niste where,

And I abood bounde in balaunce.

Raisoun.

L'Amaunt. O, there a noble conisaunce!

But I wil that thou knowe him now

Ginning and ende, sith that thou

Art so anguisshous and mate,

Disfigured out of astate;

Ther may no wrecche have more of wo,

Ne caitif noon enduren so.

It were to every man sitting

Of his lord have knowleching.

for if thou knewe him, out of dout,

Lightly thou shulde escapen out

Of the prisoun that marreth thee.

L'Amaunt.

L'Amaunt. E, dame! sith my lord is he,

And I his man, maad with myn honde,

I wolde right fayn undirstonde

To knowen of what kinde he be,

If any wolde enforme me.

L'Amaunt. WOLDE, seid Resoun, thee lere,

Sith thou to lerne hast sich desire,

And shewe thee, withouten fable,

A thing that is not demonstrable.

Thou shalt here lerne without science,

And knowe, withoute experience,

The thing that may not knowen be,

Ne wist ne shewid in no degree.

Thou mayst the sothe of it not witen,

Though in thee it were writen.

Thou shalt not knowe therof more

Whyle thou art reuled by his lere;

But unto him that love wol flee,

The knotte may unclosed be,

Which hath to thee, as it is founde,

So long be knet and not unbounde.

Now sette wel thyn entencion,

To here of love discripcioun.

L'Amaunt. OVE, it is an hateful pees,

A free acquitaunce, without relees,

A trouthe, fret full of falschede,

A sikernes, al set in drede;

In herte is a dispeiring hope,

And fulle of hope, it is wanhope;

Wyse woodnesse, and wood resoun,

A swete peril, in to droune,

An hevy birthen, light to bere,

A wikked wawe away to were.
It is Caribdis perilous,
Disagreeable and gracious.
It is discordaunce that can accorde,
And accordaunce to discorde.
It is cunning withoute science,
Wisdom withoute sapience,
Wit withoute discrecioun,
Favoir, withoute possession.
It is sike hele and hool siknesse,
A thrust drowned in dronkenesse,
An helthe ful of maladye,
A charitee ful of envye,
An hunger ful of habundaunce,
And a gredy suffisaunce;
Delyt right ful of hevynesse,
And drieribed ful of gladnesse;
Bitter swetnesse and swete errour,
Right evel savoured good savour;
Sinne that pardoun bath withinne,
And pardoun spotted without with sinne;
A peyne also it is, joyous,
And felonye right pitous;
Also pley that selde is stable,
And stedefast stat, right mevable;
A strengthe, weyked to stonde upright,
And feblenesse, ful of might;
Wit unavysed, sage folye,
And joye ful of turmentrye;
A laughter it is, weping ay,
Rest, that traveyleth night and day;
Also a swete helle it is,
And a sorowful Paradys;
A plesaunt gayl and esy prisoun,
And, ful of froste, somer sesoun;
Dryme temps, ful of frostes whyte,
And May, devoide of al delyte,
With seer braunches, blossoms ungrene;
And newe fruyt, fillid with winter tene.
It is a slowe, may not forbere
Ragges, ribaned with gold, to were;
for al so wel wol love be set
Under ragges as riche rochet;
And eek as wel be amourettes
In mourning blak, as bright burnettes.
for noon is of so mochel prys,
Ne no man founden is so wys,
Ne noon so high is of parage,
Ne no man founde of wit so sage,
Ne no man so hardy ne so wight,
Ne no man of so mochel might,
Noon so fulfilled of bounte,
But he with love may daunted be.
Al the world holdith this way;
Love makith alle to goon miswey,
But it be they of yvel lyf,
Whom Genius cursith, man and wyf,
That wrongly werke ageyn nature.
Noon suche I love, ne have no cure
Of suche as Loves servaunts been,
And wol not by my counsel fleen.
for I ne preyse that loving,
Wherthurgh man, at the laste ending,

Shal calle hem wrecchis fulle of wo,
Love greveth hem and shendith so.
But if thou wolt wel Love eschewe,
for to escape out of his mewe,
And make al hool thy sorwe to slake,
No bettir counsel mayst thou take,
Chan thinke to fleen wel, ywis;
May nought helpe elles; for wite thou this;
If thou fleest it, it shal fle thee;
folowe it, and folowen shal it thee.

L' Amaunt.

WHAN I hadde herd al Resoun seyn,
Which hadde spilt hir speche in
veyn:
Dame, seyde I, I dar wel sey
Of this avaunt me wel I may
That from your scole so deviaunt
I am, that never the more avaunt
Right nought am I, thurgh your doctryne;
I dulle under your disciplyne;
I wot no more than I wist er,
To me so contrarie and so fer
Is every thing that ye me lere;
And yit I can it al par cuere.
Myn herte foryetith therof right nought,
It is so writen in my thought;
And depe graven it is so tendir
That al by herte I can it rendre,
And rede it over comunely;
But to mysilf lewedist am I.
But sith ye love discreven so,
And lakke and preise it, bothe two,
Defyneth it into this letter,
That I may thenke on it the better;
for I herde never diffyne it ere,
And wilfully I wolde it lere.

Raisoun.

IF love be serched wel and sought,
It is a sykenesse of the thought
Annexed and knet bitwixe tweyne,
Which male and female, with oo cheyne,
So frely byndith, that they nil twinne,
Whether so therof they lese or winne.
The roote springith, thurgh hoot brenning,
Into disordinat desiring
for to kissen and embrace,
And at her lust them to solace.
Of other thing love recchith nought,
But setteth hir herte and al hir thought
More for delectacioun
Chan any procreacioun
Of other fruyt by engendring;
Which love to God is not plesing;
for of hir body fruyt to get
They yewe no force, they are so set
Upon delyt, to pley in fere.
And somme have also this manere,
To feynen hem for love seke;
Sich love I preise not at a leke.
for paramours they do but feyne;
To love truly they disdeyne.
They falsen ladies traitoursly,
And sweren hem othes utterly,

With many a lesing, and many a fable,
And al they finden deceyvable.
And, whan they her lust han geten,
The hoot ernes they al foryeten.
Wimmen, the harm they byen ful sore;
But men this thenken evermore,
That lasse harm is, so mote I thee,
Disceyve them, than disceyved be;
And namely, wher they ne may
finde non other mene wey.
for I wot wel, in sothfastnesse,
That who doth now his bisynesse
With any womman for to dele,
for any lust that he may fele,
he doth trespassse, I you ensure.
for he shulde setten at his wil
to geten a likly thing him til,
And to sustenen, if he might,
And kepe forth, by kindes right,
his owne lyknesse and semblable,
for bicause al is corumpable,
And faille shulde successioun,
Ne were ther generacioun
Our sectis strene for to save.
Whan fader or moder am in grave,
hir children shulde, whan they ben deede,
ful diligent ben, in hir steede,
to use that werke on such a wyse,
That oon may thurgh another ryse.
therfore set kinde therin delyt,
for men therin shulde hem delyte,
And of that dede be not erke.
But ofte aythes haunt that werke.
for noon wolde drawe therof a draught
Ne were delyt, which hath him caught.
This hadde sothil dame Nature;
for noon goth right, I thee ensure,
Ne hath entent hool ne parfyte;
for hir desir is for delyt,
The which fortene crece and eke
The pley of love for ofte seke,
And thralle hemsilf, they be so nyce,
Unto the prince of every vyce.
for of ech sinne it is the rote,
Unlefulle lust, though it be sote,
And of al yvel the racyne,
As Cullius can determyne,
Which in his tyme was ful sage,
In a boke he made of Age,
Wher that more he preyseth Elde,
Though he be croked and unwelde,
And more of commendacioun,
Chan Youthe in his discrepcioun.
for Youthe set bothe man and wyf
In al perel of soule and lyf;
And perel is, but men have grace,
The tyme of youthe for to pace,
Withoute any deth or distresse,
It is so ful of wildenesse;
So ofte it doth shame or damage
To him or to his linage.
It ledith man now up, now down,

In mochel dissolucioun,
And makith him love ill company,
And lede his lyf disreweily,
And halt him payed with noon estate.
Within himsilf is such debate,
He chaungith purpos and entent,
And yalt him into som covent,
To liven aftir her emprise,
And lesith fredom and fraunchyse,
That Nature in him hadde set,
The which ageyn he may not get,
If he there make his mansioun
for to abyde professioun.
Though for a tyme his herte absente,
It may not fayle, he shal repente,
And eke abyde thilke day
To leve his abit, and goon his way,
And lesith his worship and his name,
And dar not come ageyn for shame;
But al his lyf he doth so mourne,
Bicause he dar not hoom retourne.
fredom of kinde so lost hath he
That never may recured be,
But if that God him graunte grace
That he may, er he hennes pace,
Conteyne undir obedience
Thurgh the vertu of pacience.
for Youthe set man in al folye,
In unthrift and in ribaudye,
In lecherye, and in outrage,
So ofte it chaungith of corage.
Youthe ginneth ofte sich bargeyn,
That may not ende withouten peyn.
In gret perel is set youth/hede,
Delyt so doth his bridil lede.
Delyt thus hangith, drede thee nought,
Bothe mannish body and his thought,
Only thurgh Youthe, his chamberere,
That to don yvel is customere,
And of nought elles taketh hede
But only folkes for to lede
Into disporte and wildenesse,
So is she froward from sadnesse.
BUT Elde drawith hem therfro;
Who wot it nought, he may wel go
Demand of hem that now am olde,
That whylom Youthe hadde in holde,
Which yit remembre of tendir age,
How it hem brought in many a rage,
And many a foly therin wrought.
But now that Elde hath hem thurgh/sought,
They repente hem of her folye,
That Youthe hem putte in jupardye,
In perel and in mucche wo,
And made hem ofte amis to do,
And suen yvel companye,
Riot and avouterie.
BUT Elde can ageyn restreyne
from suche foly, and refreyne,
And set men, by hir ordinaunce,
In good reule and in governaunce.
But yvel she spendith hir servyse,
for no man wol hir love, ne pryse;

She is hated, this wot I wele.
Hir acquyntaunce wolde no man fele,
Ne han of Elde companye,
Men hate to be of hir alye,
for no man wolde bicomene olde,
Ne dye, whan he is yong and bolde.
And Elde merveilith right gretly,
Whan they remembre hem inwardly
Of many a perelous emprise,
Whiche that they wrought in sondry wyse,
How ever they might, withoute blame,
Escape away withoute shame,
In youthe, withouten damage
Or reproof of her linage,
Losse of membre, sheding of blode,
Perel of deth, or losse of good.
WHOSHT thou nought where Youthe abit,
That men so preisen in her wit?
With Delyt she halt sojour,
for bothe they dwellen in oo tour.
As longe as Youthe is in sesoun,
They dwellen in oon mansioun.
Delyt of Youthe wol have servyse
To do what so he wol devyse;
And Youthe is redy evermore
for to obey, for smerte of sore,
Unto Delyt, and hym to yive
Hir servise, whyl that she may live.
WHERE Elde abit, I wol thee telle
Shortly, and no whyle dwelle,
for thider bihoveth thee to go.
If Deth in youthe thee not slo,
Of this journey thou maist not faile.
With hir Labour and Travaile
Logged been, with Sorwe and Wo,
That never out of hir courte go.
Payne and Distresse, Syknesse and Ire,
And Malencoly, that angry sire,
Ben of hir paleys senatours;
Groning and Grueching, hir herbergeours,
The day and night, hir to turment,
With cruel Deth they hir present,
And tellen hir, erliche and late,
That Deth stant armed at hir gate.
Chan bringe they to hir remembraunce
The foly dedis of hir infaunce,
Whiche causen hir to mourne in wo
That Youthe hath hir bigiled so,
Whiche sodeynly away is hasted.
She wepeth the tyme that she hath wasted,
Compleyning of the preterit,
And the present, that not abit,
And of hir olde vanitee,
That, but afor hir she may see
In the future som socour,
To leggen hir of hir dolour,
To graunt hir tyme of repentaunce,
for hir sinnes to do penaunce,
And at the laste so hir governe
To winne the joy that is eterne,
fro which go bakward Youthe hir made,
In vanitee to droune and wade.
for present tyme abidith nought,
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It is more swift than any thought;
So litel while it doth endure
That ther nys compe ne mesure.
BUT how that ever the game go,
Who list have joye and mirth also
Of love, be it he or she,
High or lowe, whoso it be,
In fruyt they shulde hem delyte;
Her part they may not elles quyte,
To save hemself in honestee,
And yit ful many oon I see
Of wimmen, sothly for to seyne,
That ay desire and wolde fayne
The pley of love, they be so wilde,
And not coveite to go with childe.
And if with childe they be perchaunce,
They wole it holde a gret mischaunce;
But whatsomever wo they fele,
They wol not pleyne, but concele;
But if it be any fool or nyce,
In whom that shame hath no justyce,
for to delyt echon they drawe,
That haunte this werk, bothe high and lawe,
Save sich that aren worth right nought,
That for money wol be bought.
Such love I preise in no wyse,
Whan it is given for covetise.
I preise no womman, though she be wood,
That yeveth hirsilf for any good.
for litel shulde a man telle
Of hir, that wol hir body selle,
Be she mayde, be she wyf,
That quik wol selle hir, by hir lyf.
How faire chere that ever she make,
He is a wrecche, I undirtake,
That loveth such one, for swete or sour,
Though she him calle hir paramour,
And laugheth on him, and makith him feeste.
for certeynly no suche a beeste
To be loved is not worthy,
Or bere the name of druery.
Noon shulde hir please, but he were wood,
That wol dispoile him of his good.
Yit nevertheles, I wol not sey
But she, for solace and for pley,
May a jewel or other thing
Take of her loves free yeving;
But that she aske it in no wyse,
for drede of shame of covetise.
And she of hirs may him, certeyn,
Withoute sclaundre, yeven ageyn,
And joyne her hertes togidre so
In love, and take and yeve also.
Croue not that I wolde hem twinne,
Whan in her love ther is no sinne;
I wol that they togidre go,
And doon al that they han ado,
As curteis shulde and debonaire,
And in her love beren hem faire,
Withoute vyce, bothe he and she;
So that alwey, in honestee,
fro foly love they kepe hem clere
That brenneth hertis with his fere;

And that her love, in any wyse,
Be devoid of covetise.
Good love shulde engendrid be
Of trewe herte, just, and secrete,
Of trewe herte, just, and secrete,
And not of such as sette her thought
To have her lust, and ellis nought,
So are they caught in Loves lace,
Truly, for bodily solace.
FLESHLY delyt is so present
With thee, that sette al thyn entent,
Withoute more, what shulde I glose?
for to gete and have the Rose;
Whiche makith thee so mate and wood
That thou desirest noon other good.
But thou art not an inche the nerre,
But ever abydest in sorwe and werre,
As in thy face it is sene;
It makith thee bothe pale and lene;
Thy might, thy vertu goth away.
A sory gest, in goode fay,
Thou herberdest than in thyn inne,
The God of Love whan thou let inne!
Wherfore I rede, thou shette him out,
Or he shal greve thee, out of doute;
for to thy profit it wol turne,
If he nomore with thee sojourne.
In gret mischeef and sorwe sonken
Ben hertis, that of love arn dronken,
As thou peraventure knowen shal,
Whan thou hast lost thy tyme al,
And spent thy youthe in ydilnesse,
In waste, and woful lustinesse;
If thou maist live the tyme to see
Of love for to delivered be,
Thy tyme thou shalt biwepe sore
The whiche never thou maist restore.
for tyme lost, as men may see,
For nothing may recured be.
And if thou scape yit, atte laste,
fro Love, that hath thee so faste
Knit and bounden in his lace,
Certeyn, I holde it but a grace.
for many oon, as it is seyn,
Have lost, and spent also in veyn,
In his servyse, withoute socour,
Body and soule, good, and tresour,
Wit, and strengthe, and eek richesse,
Of which they hadde never redresse.
THAS taught and preched hath
Resoun,
But Love spilte hir sermoun,
That was so impied in my thought,
That hir doctrine I sette at nought.
And yit ne seide she never a dele,
That I ne understode it wele,
Word by word, the mater al.
But unto Love I was so thral,
Whiche callith overal his pray,
He chasith so my thought alway,
And holdith myn herte undir his sele,
As trust and trew as any stele;
So that no devocioun
Ne hadde I in the sermoun
Of dame Resoun, ne of hir rede;

It toke no sojour in myn hede,
for alle yede out at oon ere
That in that other she dide lere;
fully on me she lost hir lore,
Hir speche me greved wondir sore.
HAN unto hir for ire I seide,
for anger, as I dide abraide:
Dame, and is it your wille algate,
That I not love, but that I hate
Alle men, as ye me teche?
for if I do aftir your speche,
Sith that ye seyn love is not good,
Than must I nedis say with mood,
If I it leve, in hatrede ay
Liven, and voide love away
from me, and been a sinful wrecche,
Hated of all that love that tecche.
I may not go noon other gate,
for either must I love or hate.
And if I hate men of newe
More than love, it wol me rewe,
As by your preching semeth me,
for Love nothing ne preisith thee.
Ye yeve good counseil, sikirly,
That prechith me al day, that I
Shulde not Loves lore alowe;
He were a fool, wolde you not trowe!
In speche also ye han me taught
Another love, that knowen is naught,
Whiche I have herd you not repreve,
To love ech other; by your leve,
If ye wolde diffyne it me,
I wolde gladly here, to see,
At the leest, if I may lere
Of sondry loves the manere.

Raison.
ERTIS, freend, a fool art thou
Whan that thou nothing wolt allowe
That I thee for thy profit say.
Yit wol I sey thee more, in fay;
for I am redy, at the leste,
To accomplisse thy requeste,
But I not wher it wol avayle;
In veyne, peraventure, I shal travayle.
LOVE ther is in sondry wyse,
As I shal thee here devyse.
for som love leful is and good;
I mene not that which makith thee wood,
And bringith thee in many a fit,
And ravisshith fro thee al thy wit,
It is so merveilous and queynt;
With such love be no more aqueynt.
Comment Raisoun diffinieth Amistie.
LOVE of frendshipe also
ther is,
Whiche makith no man doon
amis,
Of wille knit bitwixe two,
That wol not breke for wele
ne wo;
Whiche long is lykly to con-
tune,
Whan wille and goodis ben
in comune;

Grounded by Goddis ordinaunce,
fool, withoute discordaunce;
With hem holding comuntee
Of al her goode in charitee,
That ther be noon excepcioun
Thurgh chaunging of entencioun;
That ech helpe othe at hir neede,
And wysly hele bothe word and dede;
Trewes of mening, devoid of slouthe,
for wit is nought withoute trouthe;
So that the ton dar al his thought
Seyn to his freend, and spare nought,
As to himself, without dreding
To be discovered by wreying.
for glad is that conjuncioun,
Whan ther is noon suspicioun
Ne lak in hem, whom they wolde prove
That trewe and parfit weren in love.
for no man may be amiable,
But if he be so ferme and stable,
That fortune chaunge him not, ne blinde,
But that his freend alwey him finde,
Bothe pore and riche, in oon estate.
for if his freend, thurgh any gate,
Wol compleyne of his povertie,
He shulde not byde so long, til he
Of his helping him requere;
for good deed, done but thurgh prayere,
Is sold, and bought to dere ywis,
To hert that of gret valour is.
for hert fulfilled of gentilnesse
Can yvel demene his distresse.
And man that worthy is of name
To asken often hath gret shame.
GOOD man brenneth in his thought
for shame, whan he axeth ought.
He hath gret thought, and dredith ay
for his disese, whan he shal pray
his freend, lest that he warned be,
Til that he preve his stabiltee.
But whan that he hath founden oon
That trusty is and trewe as stone,
And hath assayed him at al,
And found him stedefast as a wal,
And of his freendship be certeyne,
He shal him shewe bothe joye and peyne,
And al that he dar thinke or sey,
Withoute shame, as he wel may.
for how shulde he ashamed be
Of sich oon as I tolde thee?
for whan he woot his secree thought,
The thridde shal knowe therof right nought;
for tweyn in nombre is bet than three
In every counsel and secree.
Repreve he dredeth never a del,
Who that biset his wordis wel;
for every wys man, out of drede,
Can kepe his tunge til he see nede;
And foolles can not holde hir tunge;
A foolles belle is sone runge.
IT shal a trewe freend do more
To helpe his felowe of his sore,
And socoure him, whan he hath nede,

In al that he may doon in dede;
And gladder be that he him plesith
Than is his felowe that he esith.
And if he do not his requeste,
He shal as moche him moleste
As his felow, for that he
May not fulfille his voluntee
As fully as he hath requered.
If bothe the hertis Love hath fered,
Joy and wo they shul depart,
And take evenly ech his part.
Half his anoy he shal have ay,
And comfort him what that he may;
And of his blisse parte shal he,
If love wol departed be.
And whilom of this amitee
Spak Tullius in a ditee:
MAN shulde maken his request
Unto his freend, that is honest;
And he goodly shulde it fulfille,
But it the more were out of skile,
And otherwise not graunt therto,
Except only in cases two:
If men his freend to deth wolde dryve,
Lat him be bisy to save his lyve.
Also if men wolen him assaile,
Of his wurship to make him faille,
And hindren him of his renoun,
Lat him, with ful entencioun,
His dever doon in ech degre
That his freend ne shamed be.
In this two cases with his might,
Taking no kepe to skile nor right,
As ferre as love may him excuse;
This oughte no man to refuse.
This love that I have told to thee
Is nothing contrarie to me;
This wol I that thou folowe wel,
And leve the tother everydel.
This love to vertu al attendith,
The tothir foolles blent and shendith.
ANOTHER love also there is,
That is contrarie unto this,
Which desyre is so constreyned
That it is but wille feyned;
Hwey fro trouthe it doth so varie,
That to good love it is contrarie;
for it maymeth, in many wyse,
Syke hertis with coveityse;
Al in winning and in profyt
Sich love settith his delyt.
This love so hangeth in balaunce
That, if it lese his hope, perchaunce,
Of lucre, that he is set upon,
It wol faille, and quenche anon;
for no man may be amorous,
Ne in his living vertuous,
But if he love more, in mood,
Men for hemself than for hir good.
for love that profit doth abyde
Is fals, and bit not in no tyde.
This love cometh of dame fortune,
That litel while wol contune;

for it shal chaungen wonder sone,
And take eclips right as the mone,
Whan she is from us ylet
Thurgh erthe, that bitwixe is set
The sonne and hir, as it may falle,
Be it in party, or in alle;
The shadowe maketh her bemis merke,
And hir hornes to shewe derke,
That part where she hath lost hir lyght
Of phebys fully, and the sight;
Til whan the shadowe is overpast,
She is enlumined ageyn as faste,
Thurgh brightnesse of the sonne bemes
That yeveth to hir ageyn hir lemes.
That love is right of sich nature;
Now is it fair, and now obscure,
Now bright, now clippy of manere,
And whylom dim, and whylom clere.
As sone as povertie ginneth take,
With mantel and with wedis blake
It hidith of Love the light away,
That into night it turneth day;
It may not see Richesse shyne
Til the blakke shadowes fyne.
for, whan Richesse shyneth bright,
Love recovereth ageyn his light;
And whan it failith, he wol flit,
And as she groweth, so groweth it.
of this love, here what I sey:
The riche men are loved ay,
And namely tho that sparand bene,
That wol not wasse hir hertes clene
Of the filthe, nor of the vyce
Of gredy brenning avaryce.
The riche man ful fond is, ywis,
That weneth that he loved is.
If that his herte it understood,
It is not he, it is his good;
He may wel witen in his thought,
His good is loved, and he right nought.
for if he be a nigard eke,
Men wole not sette by him a leke,
But haten him; this is the soth.
Lo, what profit his catel doth!
Of every man that may him see,
It geteth him nought but enmittee.
But he amende him of that vyce,
And knowe himsilf, he is not wys.
ERTIS, he shulde ay frendly be,
To gete him love also ben free,
Or ellis he is not wyse ne sage
No more than is a gote ramage.
That he not loveth, his dede proveth,
Whan he his richesse so wel loveth,
That he wol hyde it ay and spare,
His pore freendis seen forfare;
To kepe it ay is his purpose,
Til for drede his eyen close,
And til a wikked deth him take;
Him hadde lever asondre shake,
And late his limes asondre ryve,
Chan leve his richesse in his lyve.
He thenkith parte it with no man;

Certayn, no love is in him than.
How shulde love within him be,
Whan in his herte is no pite?
That he trespasseth, wel I wat,
for ech man knowith his estat;
for wel him oughte be reproved
That loveth nought, ne is not loved.
AT sith we arn to fortune comen,
And han our germoun of hir nomen,
A wondir wil I telle thee now,
Thou herddest never sich oon, I trow.
I not wher thou me leven shal,
Though sothfastnesse it be in al,
As it is writen, and is sooth,
That unto men more profit doth
The froward fortune and contraire,
Than the swote and debonaire;
And if thee thinke it is doutable,
It is thurgh argument provable.
for the debonaire and softe
falsith and bigylith ofte;
forliche a moder she can cherishe
And milken as doth a norrys;
And of hir goode to hem deles,
And yeveth hem part of her joweles,
With grette richesse and dignitee;
And hem she hoteth stabiltee
In a state that is not stable,
But chaunging ay and variable;
And fedith hem with glorie veyne,
And worldly blisse noncerteyne.
Whan she hem settith on hir whele,
Than wene they to be right wele,
And in so stable state withalle,
That never they wene for to falle.
And whan they set so highe be,
They wene to have in certintee
Of hertly frendis so gret noumbre,
That nothing mighte her stat encombre;
They truste hem so on every syde,
Wening with hem they wolde abyde
In every perel and mischaunce,
Withoute chaunge or variaunce,
Bothe of catel and of good;
And also for to spende hir blood
And alle hir membris for to spille,
Only to fulfille hir wille.
They maken it hole in many wyse,
And hoten hem hir ful servyse,
How sore that it do hem smerte,
Into hir very naked sherte!
Herte and al, so hole they yeve,
for the tyme that they may live,
So that, with her flaterye,
They maken foolis glorifye
Of hir wordis greet speking,
And han thereof a rejoyssing,
And trowe hem as the Evangyle;
And it is al falsheed and gyle,
As they shal afterwarde see,
Whan they arn falle in povertie,
And been of good and catel bare;
Than shulde they seen who freendis ware.

for of an hundred, certeynly,
Nor of a thousand ful scarsly,
Ne shal they fynde unnethis oon.
Whan povertie is comen upon,
for this fortune that I of telle,
With men whan hir lust to dwelle,
Makith hem to lese hir conisaunce,
And nourishith hem in ignoraunce.
When high estat is she doth reverse,
And maketh hem to tumble doun
Of hir whele, with sodeyn toun,
And from hir richesse doth hem flee,
And plongeth hem in povertie,
As a stepmoder envious,
And leyeth a plastre dolorous
Unto her hertis, wounded egre,
Which is not tempred with vinegre,
But with povertie and indigence,
for to shewe, by experience,
That she is fortune verely
In whom no man shulde affy,
Nor in hir yeffis have fiaunce,
She is so ful of variaunce.
Thus can she maken high and lowe,
Whan they from richesse aren throwe,
fully to knowen, withouten were,
freend of effect, and freend of chere;
And which in love weren trew and stable,
And whiche also weren variable,
After fortune, hir goddesse,
In povertie, outhir in richesse;
for al she yeveth, out of drede,
Unhappe bereveth it in dede;
for Infortune lat not oon
Of freendis, whan fortune is goon;
I mene tho freendis that wol flee
Anoon as entreth povertie.
And yit they wol not leve hem so,
But in ech place where they go
They calle hem Wrecche, scorne and blame,
And of hir mishappe hem diffame,
And, namely, sicke as in richesse
Pretendith most of stablenesse,
Whan that they sawe him set onlofte,
And weren of him socoured ofte,
And most yholpe in al hir nede:
But now they take no maner hede,
But seyn, in voice of flaterie,
That now apperith hir folye,
Overal whereso they fare,
And singe: Go, farewell feldefare.
Alle suche freendis I beshrewe,
for of the trewe ther be to fewe;
But sothfast freendis, what so bityde,
In every fortune wolen abyde;
They han hir hertis in suche noblesse
That they nil love for no richesse;
Nor, for that fortune may hem sende,
They wolen hem socoure and defende;
And chaunge for softe ne for sore,
for who is freend, loveth evermore.
Though men drawe sward his freend to slo,

He may not hewe hir love atwo.
When, in the case that I shal sey,
for pride and ire lese it he may,
And for reprove by nyctee,
And discovering of privitee,
With tonge wounding, as feloun,
Thurgh venomous detraccioun,
frend in this case wol gon his way,
for nothing greve him more ne may;
And for nought ellis wol he flee,
If that he love in stabilitee.
And certeyn, he is wel bigoon
Among a thousand that fyndith oon,
for ther may be no richesse,
Ageyns friendship, of worthinesse;
for it ne may so high atteigne
As may the valoure, sooth to seyne,
Of him that loveth trew and wel;
friendship is more than is catel.
for frend in court ay better is
Than peny in his purs, certis;
And fortune, mishapping,
Whan upon men she is falling,
Thurgh misturning of hir chaunce,
And casteth hem oute of balaunce,
She makith, thurgh hir adversitee,
Men ful cleerly for to see
him that is freend in existence
from him that is by apparence.
for Infortune makith anoon
To knowe thy freendis fro thy foon,
By experience, right as it is;
The which is more to preyse, ywis,
Than is miche richesse and tresour;
for more doth profit and valour
Povertie, and such adversitee,
Bifore than doth prosperitee;
for the toon yeveth conisaunce,
And the tother ignoraunce.
AND thus in povertie is in dede
Trouthe declared fro falsehede;
for feynthe frendis it wol declare,
And trewe also, what wey they fare,
for whan he was in his richesse,
These freendis, ful of doublenesse,
Offrid him in many wyse
hert and body, and servyse.
What wolde he than ha yeve to ha bought
To knowen openly her thought,
That he now hath so clerly seen?
The lasse bigyled he sholde have been
And he hadde than perceyved it,
But richesse nold not late him wit.
Wel more avauntage doth him than,
Sith that it makith him a wys man,
The greet mischeef that he receyveth,
Than doth richesse that him deceyveth.
Richesse riche ne makith nought
him that on tresour set his thought;
for richesse stont in suffisaunce
And nothing in habundaunce;
for suffisaunce alonly
Makith men to live richely.

for he that hath but miche tweyne,
Ne more value in his demaigne,
Liveth more at ese, and more is riche,
Than doth he that is so chiche,
And in his bern bath, soth to seyn,
An hundred muwis of whete greyn,
Though he be chapman or marchaunt,
And have of golde many besaunt.
for in the geting he hath such wo,
And in the keeping drede also,
And set evermore his bisynesse
for to encrese, and not to lesse,
for to augment and multiply.
And though on hepis it lye him by,
Yit never shal make his richesse
Asseth unto his gredinesse.
But the poure that recchith nought,
Save of his lyfode, in his thought,
Which that he getith with his travaile,
He dredith nought that it shal faille,
Though he have lytel worldis good,
Mete and drinke, and esy food,
Upon his travel and living,
And also suffisaunt clothing.
Or if in syknesse that he falle,
And lothe mete and drink withalle,
Though he have nought, his mete to by,
He shal bithinke him hastely,
To putte him out of al daunger,
That he of mete hath no mister;
Or that he may with litel eke
be founden, whyl that he is seke;
Or that men shul him bere in hast,
To live, til his syknesse be past,
To somme maysondewe bityde.
He cast nought what shal him bityde.
He thenkith nought that ever he shal
into any syknesse falle.
AND though it falle, as it may be,
That al betyme spare shal he
As mochel as shal to him suffyce,
Whyl he is syke in any wyse,
He doth it, for that he wol be
Content with his povertie
Withoute nede of any man.
So miche in litel have he can,
He is apayed with his fortune;
And for he nil be importune
Unto no wight, ne onerous,
Nor of hir goodes covetous;
Therfore he spareth, it may wel been,
his pore estat for to sustene.
If him lust not for to spare,
But suffrith forth, as nought ne ware,
Atte last it hapneth, as it may,
Right unto his laste day,
And taketh the world as it wolde be;
for ever in herte thenkith he,
The soner that the deeth him slo,
To paradys the soner go
he shal, there for to live in blisse,
Wher that he shal no good misse.
Thider he hopith God shal him sende

Aftir his wrecchid lyves ende.
Pictagoras himsilf rehereses,
In a book that the Golden Verses
Is clepid, for the nobilitee
Of the honourable ditee:
HAN, whan thou gost thy body fro,
free in the air thou shalt up go,
And leven al humanitee,
And purely live in deitee.
He is a fool, withouten were,
That trowith have his countre here.
In erthe is not our countre,
That may these clerkis seyn and see
In Boece of Consolacioun,
Wher it is maked mencion
Of our countree pleyn at the eye,
By teching of philosophye,
Wher lewid men might lere wit,
Whoso that wolde translaten it.
If he be sicke that can wel live
Aftir his rente may him yive,
And not desyreth more to have,
That may fro povertie him save:
A wys man seide, as we may seen,
Is no man wrecched, but he it wene,
Be he king, knight, or ribaud,
And many a ribaud is mery and baud,
That swinkith, and berith, bothe day and night,
Many a burthen of gret might,
The whiche dothe him lasse offense,
for he suffrith in patience.
They laugh and daunce, trippe and singe,
And ley not up for her living,
But in the tavern al dispendith
The winning that God hem sendith.
Than goth he, fardels for to bere,
With as good chere as he did ere;
To swinke and traveile he not feynith,
for for to robben he disdeynith;
But right anoon, aftir his swinke,
He goth to tavern for to drinke.
Alle these ar riche in abundaunce,
That can thus have suffisaunce
Wel more than can an usurer,
As God wel knowith, withoute were.
for an usurer, so God me see,
Shal never for richesse riche bee,
But evermore pore and indigent,
Scarce, and gredy in his entent.
AND soth it is, whom it displese,
Ther may no marchaunt live at ese,
His herte in sich a were is set,
That it quik brenneth more to get,
Ne never shal enough have geten;
Though he have gold in gerneris yeten,
for to be nedy he dredith sore.
Wherfore to geten more and more
He set his herte and his desire;
So hote he brennith in the fire
Of covetise, that makith him wood
To purchase other mennes good.
He undirfongith a gret peyne,
That undirtakith to drinke up Seyne;

for the more he drinkith, ay
The more he levethe, the soth to say.
This is the thurst of fals geting,
That last ever in coveiting,
And the anguisshe and distresse
With the fire of gredinesse.
She fighteth with him ay, and stryveth,
That his herte asondre ryveth;
Such gredinesse him assaylith,
That whan he most hath, most he faylith.

PHISCIENS and advocates
Gon right by the same yates;
They selle hir science for winning,
And haunte hir craft for greet geting.
Hir winning is of such swetnesse,
That if a man falle in sikenesse,
They are ful glad, for hir encesse;
for by hir wille, withoute lees,
Everiche man shulde be seke,
And though they dye, they set not a leke.
After, whan they the gold have take,
ful litel care for hem they make.
They wolde that fourty were seke at onis,
Ye, two hundred, in flesh and bonis,
And yit two thousand, as I gesse,
for to encesen her richesse.
They wol not worchen, in no wyse,
But for lucre and coveityse;
for fysyk ginneth first by fy,
The fysyken also sothely;
And eithen it goth fro fy to sy;
To truste on hem, it is foly;
for they nil, in no maner gree,
Do right nought for charitee.

EKE in the same secte are set
Alle tho that prechen for to get
Worshipes, honour, and richesse.
Her hertis arm in greet distresse,
That folk ne live not holily.
But aboven al, specialy,
Sich as prechen for veynglorie,
And toward God have no memorie,
But forth as ypocrites trace,
And to her soules deth purchase,
And outward shewen holynesse,
Though they be fulle of cursidnesse.
Not liche to the apostles twelve,
They deceyve other and hemselfe;
Bigyled is the gyler than.
for preching of a cursed man,
Though it to other may profyte,
Himsilf availleth not a myte;
for oft good predicacioun
Cometh of evel entencioun.
To him not vailith his preching,
Al helpe he other with his teching;
for where they good ensauple take,
There is he with veynglorie shake.
But lat us leven these prechoures,
And speke of hem that in her toures
Hepe up her gold, and faste shette,
And sore theron her herte sette.
They neither love God, ne drede;

They kepe more than it is nede,
And in her bagges sore it binde,
Out of the sonne, and of the winde;
They putte up more than nede ware,
Whan they seen pore folk forfare,
for hunger dye, and for cold quake;
God can wel vengeance therof take.
Thre gret mischeves hem assailith,
And thus in gadring ay travaylith;
With moche peyne they winne richesse;
And drede hem holdith in distresse,
To kepe that they gadre faste;
With sorwe they leve it at the laste;
With sorwe they bothe dye and live,
That to richesse her hertis yive,
And in defaute of love it is,
As it shewith ful wel, ywis.
for if these gredy, the sothe to seyn,
Loveden, and were loved ageyn,
And good love regned over alle,
Such wikkidnesse ne shulde falle;
But he shulde yewe that most good had
To hem that weren in nede bistad,
And live withoute fals usure,
for charitee ful clene and pure.
If they hem yewe to goodnesse,
Defending hem from ydelnesse,
In al this world than pore noon
We shulde finde, I trowe, not oon.
But chaunged is this world unstable;
for love is overal vendable.
We see that no man loveth now
But for winning and for prow;
And love is thralled in servage
Whan it is sold for avauntage;
Yit wommen wol hir bodies selle;
Suche soules goth to the devel of helle.

Here is lacking from 5170 of the French to 10717 of the same.

WHAN Love had told hem his entente,
The baronage to councel wente;
In many sentences they fille,
And dyversly they seide hir wille;
But aftir discord they accorded,
And hir accord to Love recorded.

Sir, seiden they, we been at oon,
By even accord of everichoon,
Outtake Richesse alonly,
That sworn hath ful hauteynly,
That she the castel nil assaile,
Ne smyte a stroke in this bataile,
With dart, ne mace, spere, ne knyf,
for man that speketh or bereth the lyf,
And blameth your empryse, ywis,
And from our hoost departed is,
At leeste wey, as in this plyte,
So hath she this man in dyspyte;
for she seith he ne loved hir never,
And therfor she wol hate him ever.
for he wol gadre no tresore,
He hath hir wrath for evermore.

he agiltre hir never in other caas,
Lo, here al hoolly his trespas!
She seith wel, that this other day
She asked hir leve to goon the way
That is clepid To moche Yeving,
And spak ful faire in his praying;
And whan he prayde hir, pore was he,
But whan he prayde hir, pore was he,
Therfore she warned him the entree.
Ne yit is he not thriven so
That he hath geten a peny or two,
That he hath gotten a peny or two,
That he hath gotten a peny or two,

RICHESSE us alle told;
And whan Richesse us this recorded,
Withouten hir we been accorded.
And we finde in our accordaunce,
That false Semblant and Abstinaunce,
With alle the folk of hir bataile,
Shulle at the hinder gate assaile,
That wikkid Tunge hath in keping,
With his Normans, fulle of jangling.
And with hem Curtesie and Largesse,
That shulle shewe hir hardinesse
To the olde wyf that kepeth so harde
Fair Welcoming within hir ward.

SHAL Delyte and Wel Helinge
Fonde Shame adoun to bringe;
With al hir hoost, erly and late,
They shulle assailen thilke gate.
GAYNES Drede shal Hardinesse
Assaile, and also Sikernesse,
With al the folk of hir leding,
That never wist what was fleing.
PRANCHYSE shal fighte, and eek
Ditee,
With Daunger ful of crueltee.
Thus is your hoost ordeyned wel;
Doun shal the castel every del,
If everiche do his entente,
So that Venus be presente,
Your modir, ful of vassalage,
That can ynough of such usage;
Withouten hir may no wight spede
This werk, neither for word ne dede.
Therfore is good ye for hir sende,
for thurgh hir may this werk amende.

ORDINGES, my modir, the god-
desse,
That is my lady, and my mais-
tresse,
Nis not at al at my willing,
Ne doth not at my desyring.
Yit can she somtyme doon labour,
Whan that hir lust, in my socour,
Al my nedis for to acheve,
But now I thanke hir not to greve.
My modir is she, and of childhede.
I bothe worshipec hir, and eek drede;
for who that dredith sire ne dame
Shal it abyte in body or name.
And, natheles, yit kunne we
Sende aftir hir, if nede be;
And were she nigh, she comen wolde,

I trowe that nothing might hir holde.
MY modir is of greet prowesse;
She hath tan many a fortresse,
That cost hath many a pound er this,
Ther I nas not present, ywis;
And yit men seide it was my dede;
But I come never in that stede;
Ne me ne lykith, so mote I thee,
Such toures take withoute me.
for why me thenketh that, in no wyse,
It may ben cleped but marchandise.
GO bye a courser, blak or whyte,
And pay therfor; than art thou quyte.
The marchaunt oweth thee right
nought,

Ne thou him, whan thou hast it bought.
I wol not selling clepe yeving,
for selling axeth no guerdoning;
Here lyth no thank, ne no meryte,
That oon goth from that other al quyte.
But this selling is not semblable;
for, whan his hors is in the stable,
He may it selle ageyn, pardee,
And winne on it, such hap may be;
Al may the man not lese, ywis,
for at the leest the skin is his.
Or elles, if it so bytude
That he wol kepe his hors to ryde,
Yit is he lord ay of his hors.

AT thilke chaffare is wel wors,
There Venus entremeteth nought;
for whoso such chaffare hath
bought,
He shal not worchen so wysly,
That he ne shal lese al outirly
Bothe his money and his chaffare;
But the seller of the ware
The prys and profit have shal.
Certeyn, the byer shal lese al;
for he ne can so dere it bye
To have lordship and ful maistrye,
Ne have power to make letting
Neither for yift ne for preching,
That of his chaffare, maugre his,
Another shal have as moche, ywis,
If he wol yewe as moche as he,
Of what contrey so that he be;
Or for right nought, so happe may,
If he can flater hir to hir pay.
Ben than suche marchaunts wyse?
No, but foolles in every wyse,
Whan they bye such thing wilfully,
Theras they lese her good fully.
But natheles, this dar I saye,
My modir is not wont to paye,
for she is neither so fool ne nyce,
To entremete hir of sich vyce.
But truste wel, he shal paye al,
That repente of his bargeyn shal,
Whan Dovere put him in distresse,
Al were he scoler to Richesse,
That is for me in gret yerning,
Whan she assenteth to my willing.

Nathelesse, ther can noon answer,
How high that ever his heed he shere
With rasour whetted never so kene,
That Gyle in braunches cut thriftene;
Ther can no wight distinte it so,
That he dar sey a word therto.

BUT what herberwe that ever I take,
Or what semblant that ever I make,
I mene but gyle, and folowe that;
for right no mo than Gibbe our cat
fro myce and rattes went his wyle,
Ne entende I not but to begyle;
Ne no wight may, by my clothing,
Wite with what folk is my dwelling;
Ne by my wordis yet, pardee,
So softe and so plesaunt they be.
Bihold the dedis that I do;
But thou be blind, thou oughtest so;
for, varie hir wordis fro hir dede,
They thenke on gyle, withouten drede.
What maner clothing that they were,
Or what estat that ever they bere,
Lered or lewd, lord or lady,
Knight, squier, burgeis, or bayly.

RIGHT thus whyl fals/Semblant
sermoneth,
Eftsones Love him aresoneth,
And brak his tale in the speking
As though he had him told lesing;
And seide: What, devel, is that I here?

What folk hast thou us nempned here?
May men finde religioun
In worldly habitacioun?
Fals/Semblant.

Sir, if foloweth not that they
Shulde lede a wikked lyf, parfey,
Ne not therfore her soules lese,
That hem to worldly clothes chese;
for, certis, it were gret pitee,
Men may in secular clothes see
florisschen holy religioun.
ful many a seynt in feeld and toun,
With many a virgin glorious,
Devout, and ful religious,
Had deyed, that comun clothe ay beren,
Yit seyntes nevertheles they weren.
I coude reken you many a ten;
Ye, wel nigh alle these holy wimmen,
That men in chirchis herie and seke,
Bothe maydens, and these wyves eke,
That baren many a fair child here,
Wered alwey clothis seculere,
And in the same dyden they,
That seyntes weren, and been alwey.
The eleven thousand maydens dere,
That beren in heven hir ciergis clere,
Of which men rede in chirche, and singe,
Were take in secular clothing,
Whan they resseyved martirdom,
And wonnen heven unto her hoom.
Good herte makith the gode thought;
The clothing yeveth ne reveth nought.
The gode thought and the worching,

That maketh religioun flowring,
Ther lyth the good religioun
Aftir the right entencioun.

WHOSO toke a wethers skin,
And wrapped a gredy wolf therin,
for he shulde go with lambis whyte,
Wenest thou not he wolde hem byte?
Yis! nevertheles, as he were wood,
He wolde hem very, and drinke the blood;
And wel the rather hem disceyve,
for, sith they coude not perceyve
his treget and his crueltee,
They wolde him folowe, al wolde he flee.

If ther be wolves of sich hewe
Amonges these apostlis newe,
Thou, holy chirche, thou mayst be wayled!
Sith that thy citee is assayled
Thourgh knightis of thyn owne table,
God wot thy lordship is doutable!
If they enforce hem it to winne,
That shulde defende it fro withinne,
Who might defence ayens hem make?
Withouten stroke it mot be take
Of trepeget or mangonel;
Without displaying of pensel.
And if God nil don it socour,
But lat hem renne in this colour,
Thou moost thyn heestis laten be.
Than is ther nought, but yelde thee,
Or yeve hem tribute, dotelees,
And holde it of hem to have pees:
But gretter harm bityde thee,
That they al maister of it be.
Wel conne they sorne thee withal;
By day stuffen they the wal,
And al the night they mynen there.
Nay, thou most planten elleswhere
Thyn impes, if thou wolt fruyt have;
Abyd not there thyself to save.

BUT now pees! here I turne ageyn;
I wol no more of this thing seyn,
If I may passen me herby;
I mighte maken you wery.
But I wol heten you alway
To helpe your freendis what I may,
So they wollen my company;
for they be shent al outerly
But if so falle, that I be
Oft with hem, and they with me.
And eek my lemman mot they serve,
Or they shul not my love deserve.
forsothe, I am a fals traitour;
God jugged me for a theef trichour;
forsworn I am, but wel nygh non
Wot of my gyle, til it be don.

THOURGH me hath many oon deth res-
seyved,
That my treget never aperceyved;
And yit resseyveth, and shal resseyve,
That my falsnesse never aperceyve:
But whoso doth, if he wys be,
Him is right good be war of me.
But so sligh is the deceyving

That to hard is the aperceyving.
for Protheus, that coude him chaunge
In every shap, hoomly and straunge,
Coude never sich gyle ne tresoun
As I: for I com never in toun
Ther as I mighte knowen be,
Ther as I mighte be bothe might here and see.

WEL I can my clothis chaunge.
Take oon, and make another straunge.
Now am I knight, now chasteleyn;
Now prelat, and now chapeleyn;
Now preest, now clerk, and now forstere;
Now am I maister, now scolere;
Now monk, now chanoun, now bayly;
Whatever mister man am I.
Now am I prince, now am I page,
And can by herte every langage.
Somtyme am I hoor and old;
Now am I yong, and stout, and bold;
Now am I Robert, now Robyn;
Now frere Menour, now Jacobyn;
And with me folweth my loteby,
To don me solas and company,
That bight dame Abstinence/Streynd,
In many a queynt array yfeyned.
Right as it cometh to hir tyking,
I fulfille al hir desiring.
Somtyme a wommans cloth take I;
Now am I mayde, now lady.
Somtyme I am religious;
Now lyk an anker in an hous.
Somtyme am I prioresse,
And now a nonne, and now abbesse;
And go thurgh alle regions,
Seking alle religiouns.
But to what ordre that I am sworn,
I lete the strawe, and take the corn;
To blynde folk ther I enhabite,
I axe no more but hir abite.

WHAT wol ye more? in every wyse,
Right as me list, I me disgyse.
Wel can I bere me under weed;
Unlyk is my word to my deed.
Thus make I in my trappis falle,
Thurgh my pryvileges, alle
That ben in Cristendom alyve.
I may assoile, and I may shryve,
That no prelat may lette me,
Al folk, wherever they founde be:
I noot no prelat may don so,
But if the pope be, and no mo,
That made thilk establisshing.

WHAT is not this a propre thing?
But, were my sleightis aperceyved,
Ne shulde I more been receyved
As I was wont; and wostow why?
for I dide hem a tregetry;
But therof yeve I litel tale,
I have the silver and the male;
So have I preched and eek shriven,
So have I take, so have me yiven,
Thurgh hir foly, husbond and wyf,
That I lede right a joly lyf,

Thurgh simplesse of the prelacye;
They know not al my tregetrye.

BUT for as moche as man and wyf
Shuld shewe hir paroches prest hir lyf
Ones a yeer, as seith the book,
Erany wight his housel took,
Than have I pryvilegis large,
That may of moche thing discharge;
for he may seye right thus, pardee:
Sir Preest, in shrift I telle it thee,
That he, to whom that I am shriven,
Hath me assoiled, and me yiven
Penaunce soothly, for my sinne,
Which that I fond me gilty inne;
Ne I ne have never entencioun
To make double confessioun,
Ne reherce eft my shrift to thee;
O shrift is right ynough to me.
This oughte thee suffyce wel,
Ne be not rebel never a del;
for certis, though thou haddest it sworn,
I wot no prest ne prelat born
That may to shrift eft me constreyne.
And if they don, I wol me pleyne;
for I wot where to pleyne wel.
Thou shalt not streyne me a del,
Ne enforce me, ne yit me trouble,
To make my confessioun double.
Ne I have none affeccoun
To have double absolucioun.
The firste is right ynough to me;
This latter assoiling quyte I thee.
I am unbounde; what mayst thou finde
More of my sinnes me to unbinde?
for he, that might hath in his hond,
Of alle my sinnes me unbond.
And if thou wolt me thus constreyne,
That me mot nedis on thee pleyne,
There shal no juggle imperial,
Ne bisshop, ne official,
Don jugement on me; for I
Shal gon and pleyne me openly
Unto my shrift/fadir newe,
That bight not frere Wolf untrewel
And he shal chevis him for me,
for I trowe he can hampre thee.
But, lord! he wolde be wrooth withalle,
If men him wolde frere Wolf calle!
for he wolde have no pacience,
But don al cruel vengeance!
He wolde his might don at the leest,
Ne nothing spare for goddis heest.
And, God so wis be my socour,
But thou yeve me my Saviour
At Ester, whan it lyketh me,
Withoute presing more on thee,
I wol forth, and to him goon,
And he shal housel me anon,
for I am out of thy grucching;
I kepe not dele with thee nothing.
Thus may he shryve him, that forsaketh
His paroches prest, and to me taketh.
And if the prest wol him refuse,

I am ful redy him to accuse,
And him punissh and hampre so,
That he his chirche shal forgo.
But whoso hath in his feling
The consequence of such shryving,
Shal seen that preat may never have might
To knowe the conscience aright
Of him that is under his cure.
And this ageyns holy scripture,
That biddeth every herde honeste
Have verry knowing of his beste.
But pore folk that goon by strete,
That have no gold, ne sommes grete,
Hem wolde I lete to her prelates,
Or lete hir prestis knowe hir states,
For to me right nought yeve they.

Amour.

AND why is it?
Fals Semblant. for they ne may.
They ben so bare, I take no keep;
But I wol have the fatte sheep;
Lat parish prestis have the lene,
I yeve not of hir harm a bene!
And if that prelat grucchen it,
That oughten wroth be in hir wit,
To lese her fatte bestes so,
I shal yeve hem a stroke or two,
That they shal lesen with the force.
Ye, bothe hir mytre and hir croce.
Thus jape I hem, and have do longe,
My priveleges been so stronge.



FALS SEMBLANT wolde have
stinted here,
But Love ne made him no such chere
That he was wery of his sawe;
But for to make him glad and fawe,
He seide: Tel on more specyaly,
How that thou servest untrewly.
Tel forth, and shame thee never a del;
for as thyn abit shewith wel,
Thou semest an holy heremyte.

fals Semblant. Soth is, but I am an ypocryte.

Amour. Thou gost and prechest povertie?

fals Semblant. Ye, sir; but riches hath poustee.

Amour. Thou prechest abstinence also?

fals Semblant.

SIR, I wol fillen, so mote I go,
My paunche of gode mete and wyne,
As shulde a maister of divyne;
for how that I me pover feyne,
Yit alle pore folk I disdeyne.
I love bet the acqueyntaunce
Ten tymes, of the king of fraunce,
Than of pore man of mylde mode,
Though that his soule be also gode.
for whan I see beggers quaking,
Naked on mixens al stinking,
for hungre crye, and eek for care,
I entremete not of hir fare.
They been so pore, and ful of pyne,
They might not ones yeve me dyne,
for they have nothing but hir lyf;
What shulde he yeve that likketh his knyf?

It is but foly to entremete,
To seke in houndes nest fat mete.
Let bere hem to the spitel anoon,
But, for me, comfort gete they noon.
But a riche sike usurere
Wolde I visyte and drawe nere;
him wol I comferte and rebete,
for I hope of his gold to gete.
And if that wikked deth him have,
I wol go with him to his grave.
And if ther any reprove me,
Why that I lete the pore be,
Wostow how I mot ascape?
I sey, and swere him ful rape,
That riche men han more tecches
Of sinne, than han pore wrecches,
And han of counseil more mister;
And therefore I wol drawe hem ner.
But as gret hurt, it may so be,
Hath soule in right gret povertie,
As soul in gret riches, forsothe,
Albeit that they hurten bothe,
for riches and mendicitees
Ben cleped two extremitees;
The mene is cleped suffisaunce,
Ther lyth of vertu the aboundaunce.

FOR Salamon, ful wel I woot,
In his Parables us wroot,
As it is knowe of many a wight,
In his thrittethe chapitre right:
God, thou me kepe, for thy poustee,
fro riches and mendicitee;
for if a riche man him dresse
To thenke to moche on his riches,
His herte on that so fer is set,
That he his creatour foryet;
And him, that begging wol ay greve,
How shulde I by his word him leve?
Annethe that he is a micher,
forsworn, or elles God is lyer.

Thus seith Salamon sawes;
Ne we finde writen in no lawes,
And namely in our Cristen lay,
Who seith Ye, I dar sey Nay,
That Crist, ne his apostlis dere,
Whyl that they walkede in erthe here,
Were never seen her bred begging,
for they nolde beggen for nothing.
And right thus were men wont to teche;
And in this wyse wolde it preche
The maistres of divinitee
Somtyme in Paris the citee.

AND if men wolde thergeyn appose
The naked text, and lete the glose,
It mighte some assoiled be;
for men may wel the sothe see,
That, parde, they might axe a thing
Pleyntly forth, without begging.
for they weren Goddis herdis dere,
And cure of soules hadden here,
They nolde nothing begge hir fode;
for aftir Crist was don on rode,
With hir propre hondis they wrought,

And with travel, and elles nought,
They wonnen al hir sustenaunce,
And livened forth in hir penaunce,
And the remenaunt yeve away
To other pore folk alwey.
They neither biden tour ne halle,
But leve in houses smale withalle.
A mighty man, that can and may,
Shulde with his honde and body alway
Winne him his food in laboring,
If he ne have rent or sich a thing,
Althoughe he be religious,
And God to serven curious.
Thus mote he don, or do trespas,
But if it be in certeyn cas,
That I can rehere, if mister be,
Right wel, whan the tyme I see.

EKE the book of Seynt Hustin,
Be it in paper or perchemin,
Thereas he writ of these worchinges,
Thou shalt seen that non excusinges
A parfit man ne shulde seke
By wordis, ne by dedis eke,
Althoughe he be religious,
And God to serven curious,
That he ne shal, so mote I go,
With propre hondis and body also,
Gete his food in laboring,
If he ne have propretee of thing.
Yit shulde he selle al his substaunce,
And with his swink have sustenaunce,
If he be parfit in bountee.

Thus han the bookes tolde me:
for he that wol gon ydilly,
And useth it ay besily
To haunten other mennes table,
He is a trechour, ful of fable;
Ne he ne may, by gode resoun,
Excuse him by his orisoun.
for men bihoveth, in som gyse,
Somtyme leven Goddes servyse
To gon and purchasen her nede.
Men mote eten, that is no drede,
And slepe, and eek do other thing;
So longe may they leve praying.
So may they eek hir prayer blinne,
While that they werke, hir mete to winne.

SEYNT HUSTIN wol therto accorde,
In thilke book that I recorde.
Justinian eek, that made lawes,
Hath thus forboden, by olde dawes:
No man, up peyne to be deed,
Mighty of body, to begge his breed,
If he may swinke, it for to gete;
Men shulde him rather mayme or bete,
Or doon of him apert justice,
Than suffren him in such malice.

HEY don not wel, so mote I go,
That taken such almesse so,
But if they have som privelege,
That of the peyne hem wol allege.
But how that is, can I not see,
But if the prince disseyved be;

Ne I ne wene not, sikerly,
That they may have it rightfully.
But I wol not determyne
Of princes power, ne defyne,
Ne by my word comprende, ywis,
If it so fer may strecche in this.
I wol not entremete a del;
But I trowe that the book seith wel,
Who that taketh almesses, that be
Dewe to folk that men may see
Lame, feble, wery, and bare,
Pore, or in such maner care,
That conne winne hem nevermo,
for they have no power therto,
He eteth his owne dampning,
But if he lye, that made al thing.

And if ye such a truaunt finde,
Chastise him wel, if ye be kinde.
But they wolde hate you, percas,
And, if ye fillen in hir laas,
They wolde eftsones do you scathe,
If that they mighte, late or rathe;
for they be not ful pacient,
That han the world thus foule blent.
And witeth wel, wher that God bad
The good man selle al that he had,
And folowe him, and to pore it yive,
He wolde not therfore that he live
To serven him in mendicence,
for it was never his sentence;
But he bad wirken whan that nede is,
And folwe him in goode dedis.

SEYNT POULE, that loved al holy chirche,
He bade thapostles for to wirche,
And winnen hir lyfode in that wyse,
And hem defended truaundyse,
And seide: Wirke with your honden;
Thus shul the thing be undirstonden.
He nolde, ywis, bidde hem begging,
Ne sellen gospel, ne preching,
Lest they berafte, with hir asking,
folk of hir catel or of hir thing.

OR in this world is many a man
That yeveth his good, for he ne can
Werne it for shame, or elles he
Wolde of the asher delivered be;
And, for he him encombreth so,
He yeveth him good to late him go;
But it can him nothing profyte,
They lese the yift and the meryte.
The goode folk, that Poule to preched,
Profred him ofte, whan he hem teched
Som of hir good in charite;
But therof right nothing took he;
But of his hondwerk wolde he gete
Clothes to wryen him, and his mete.

Amour.

EL me than how a man may liven,
That al his good to pore hath yiven,
And wol but only bidde his bedis,
And never with honde laboure his
nedis:
May he do so?

fals/Semblant. Ye, sir.

Amour. And how?

fals/Semblant. Sir, I wol gladly telle yow:
Seynt Austyn seith, a man may be
In houses that han propretee,
As templers and hospitellers,
And as these chanouns regulers,
Or whyte monkes, or these blake,
I wole no mo ensamplis make,
And take therof his susteneng,
for therin ne lyth no begging;
But otherweyes not, ywis,
If Austyn gabbeth not of this.
And yit ful many a monk laboureth,
That God in holy chirche honoureth;
for whan hir swinking is agoon,
They rede and singe in chirche anon.

AND for ther hath ben greet discord,
As many a wight may bere record,
Upon the estate of mendience,

I wol shortly, in your presence,
Telle how a man may begge at nede,
That hath not wherwith him to fede,
Maugre his felones jangelinges,
for sothfastnesse wol non hidinges;
And yit, percas, I may abey,
That I to yow sothly thus sey.

O, here the caas especial:
If a man be so bestial
That he of no craft hath science,
And nought desyreth ignorence,
Than may he go a begging yerne,
Til he som maner craft can lerne,
Thurgh which, withoute trauaunding,
He may in trouthe have his living.
Or if he may don no labour,
for elde, or syknesse, or langour,
Or for his tendre age also,
Than may he yit a begging go.

Rif he have, peraventure,
Thurgh usage of his noriture,
Lived over deliciously,
Than oughten good folk comunly
han of his mischeef som pitee,
And suffren him also, that he
May gon aboute and begge his breed,
That he be not for hungur deed.
Or if he have of craft cunning,
And strengthe also, and desiring
To wirken, as he hadde what,
But he finde neither this ne that,
Than may he begge, til that he
Have geten his necessitee.

Rif his winning be so lyte,
That his labour wol not acypte
Sufficiently at his living,
Yit may he go his breed begging;
fro dore to dore he may go trace,
Til he the remenaunt may purchase.
Or if a man wolde undirtake
Any emprise for to make,
In the rescous of our lay,
And it defenden as he may,

Be it with armes or lettrure,
Or other covenable cure,
If it be so he pore be,
Than may he begge, til that he
May finde in trouthe for to swinke,
And gete him clothes, mete, and drinke.
Swinke he with hondis corporel,
And not with hondis espirituel.

IN al thise caas, and in semblables,
If that ther ben mo resonables,
He may begge, as I telle you here,
And elles nought, in no manere;
As William Seynt Amour wolde preche,
And ofte wolde dispute and teche
Of this matere alle openly
At Paris ful solempnely.
And also God my soule blesse,
As he had, in this stedfastnesse,
The accord of the universitee,
And of the puple, as semeth me.

NO good man oughte it to refuse,
Ne oughte him therof to excuse,
Be wrooth or blythe whoso be;
for I wol speke, and telle it thee,
Al shulde I dye, and be put down,
As was Seynt Doull, in derk prisoun;
Or be exiled in this caas
With wrong, as maister William was,
That my moder Ypocrisie
Banished for hir greet envye.

MY moder flemed him, Seynt Amour:
This noble dide such labour
To susteyne ever the loyaltee,
That he to moche agylte me.
He made a book, and leet it wryte,
Wherin his lyf he dide al wryte,
And wolde ich reneyed begging,
And lived by my traveyling,
If I ne had rent ne other good.
What? wened he that I were wood?
for labour might me never plesse,
I have more wil to been at ese;
And have wel lever, sooth to sey,
Bifore the puple patre and prey,
And wrye me in my foxerye
Under a cope of papelardye.

QUOD Love: What devel is this I here?
What wordis tellest thou me here?

fals/Semblant. What, sir?

Amour. falsnesse, that apert is;
Than dredist thou not God?

fals/Semblant.

O, certis:

Nor selde in greet thing shal he spede
In this world, that God wol drede.
for folk that hem to vertu yiven,
And truly on her owne liven,
And hem in goodnesse ay contene,
On hem is lifel thrist ysene;
Such folk drinken gret misese;
That lyf ne may me never plesse.
But see what gold han usurers,
And silver eek in hir garners,

Carliagers, and these monyours,
Bailiffs, bedels, provost, countours;
These liven wel nygh by ravyne;
The smale puple hem mote enclyne,
And they as wolves wol hem eten.
Upon the pore folk they geten
ful moche of that they spende or
kepe;

Nis none of hem that he nil strepe,
And wryen himself wel atte fulle;
Withoute scalding they hem pulle.
The stronge the feble overgoth;
But I, that were my simple cloth,
Robbe bothe robbed and robbours,
And gyle gyled and gylours.
By my treget, I gadre and threste
The greet tresour into my cheste,
That lyth with me so faste bounde.
Myn highe paleys do I founde,
And my delytes I fulfille

With wyne at feestes at my wille,
And tables fulle of entremees;
I wol no lyf, but ese and pees,
And winne gold to spende also.
for whan the grete bagge is go,
It cometh right with my japes.
Make I not wel tumble myn apes?
To winne is alwey myn entent;
My purchas is better than my rent;
for though I shulde beten be,
Overal I entremete me;
Withoute me may no wight dure.
I walke soules for to cure.

Of al the worldes cure have I
In brede and lengthe; boldely
I wol bothe preche and eek counceilen;
With hondis wille I not traveilen,
for of the pope I have the bulle;
I ne holde not my wittes dulle.
I wol not stinten, in my lyve,
These emperours for to shryve,
Or kyngis, dukis, and lordis grete;
But pore folk al quyte I lete.

I love no such shryving, pardee,
But it for other cause be.
I rekke not of pore men,
hir astate is not worth an hen.
Wher fyndest thou a swinker of labour
Have me unto his confessour?
But emperesses, and duchesses,
Thise quenes, and eek thise countesses,
Thise abbesses, and eek Bigyns,
These grete ladyes palasyns,
These joly knightes, and baillyves,
Thise nonnes, and thise burgeis wyves,
That riche been, and eek plesing,
And thise maidens welfaring,
Wherso they clad or naked be,
Uncounceiled goth ther noon fro me.

And, for her soules savetee,
At lord and lady, and hir meynnee,
Laxe, whan they hem to me shryve,

The propretee of al hir lyve,
And make hem trowe, bothe meest and
leest,

hir paroch/prest nis but a beest
Ayens me and my company,
That shrewis been as greet as I;
for whiche I wol not hyde in hold
No privetee that me is told,
That I by word or signe, ywis,
Nil make hem knowe what it is,
And they wolen also tellen me;
They hele fro me no privetee.
And for to make yow hem perceyven,
That usen folk thus to disceyven,
I wol you seyn, withouten drede,
What men may in the gospel rede
Of Seynt Mathew, the gospelere,
That seith, as I shal you sey here.

AND the chaire of Moyses
Thus is it glosed, douteles:
That is the olde testament,
for therby is the chaire ment
Sitte Scribes and Pharisen;
That is to seyn, the cursid men
Whiche that we ypocritis calle
Doth that they preche, I rede you alle,
But doth not as they don a del,
That been not wery to seye wel,
But to do wel, no wille have they;
And they wolde binde on folk alwey,
That ben to be begyled able,
Burdens that ben importable;
On folkes shuldres thinges they
couchen
That they nil with her fingres touchen.

Amour.

ND why wol they not touche it?
fals/Semblant. Why?

for hem ne list not, sikirly;
for sadde burdens that men taken
Make folkes shuldres aken.
And if they do ought that good be,
That is for folk it shulde see:
Her burdens larger maken they,
And make hir hemmes wyde alwey,
And loven setes at the table,
The firste and most honourable;
And for to han the first chaieris
In synagoges, to hem ful dere is;
And willen that folk hem loute and
grete,
Whan that they passen thurgh the strete,
And wolen be cleped Maister also.
But they ne shulde not willen so;
The gospel is therageyns, I gesse:
That sheweth wel hir wikkidnesse.

ANOTHER custom use we:
Of hem that wol ayens us be,
We hate hem deedly everichoon,
And we wol werrey hem, as oon.
him that oon hatith, hate we alle,
And coniecte how to doon him falle.

And if we seen him winne honour,
Richesse or preys, thurgh his valour,
Drovide, rent, or dignitee,
ful fast, ywis, compassen we
By what ladder he is clomben so;
And for to maken him down to go,
With traisoun we wole him defame,
And doon him lese his gode name.
Thus from his ladder we him take,
And thus his freendis foes we make;
But word ne wite shal he noon,
Til alle his freendis been his foon.
for if we dide it openly,
We might have blame redily;
for hadde he wist of our malyce,
he hadde him kept, but he were nyce.
ANOTHER is this, that, if so falle
That ther be oon among us alle
That doth a good turn, out of
drede,
We seyn it is our alder dede.
Ye, sikerly, though he it feyned,
Or that him list, or that him deynd
A man thurgh him avaunced be;
Therof alle parcnens be we,
And tellen folk, wherso we go,
That man thurgh us is sprongen so.
And for to have of men preysing,
We purchase, thurgh our flatering,
Of riche men, of gret poustee,
Lettres, to witness our bountee;
So that man weneth, that may us see,
That alle vertu in us be.
And alwey pore we us feyne;
But how so that we begge or pleyne,
We ben the folk, without lesing,
That al thing have without having.
Thus be we dred of the puple, ywis.
And gladly my purpos is this:
I dele with no wight, but he
Have gold and tresour gret plentee;
hir acqeyntaunce wel love I;
This is moche my desyr, shortly.
I entremete me of brocages,
I make pees and mariages,
I am gladly executour,
And many tymes procuratour;
I am somtyme messenger;
That falleth not to my mister.
And many tymes I make enquestes;
for me that office not honest is;
To dele with other mennes thing,
That is to me a gret lyking.
And if that ye have ought to do
In place that I repeire to,
I shal it speden thurgh my wit,
As sone as ye have told me it.
So that ye serve me to pay,
My servyse shal be your alway.
But whoso wol chastyse me,
Hnoon my love lost hath he;
for I love no man in no gysse,

That wol me repreve or chastyse;
But I wolde al folk undirtake,
And of no wight no teching take;
for I, that other folk chastye,
Wol not be taught fro my folye.

LOVE noon hermitage more;
Alle desertes, and holtes hore,
And grete wodes everichoon,
I lete hem to the Baptist Johan.
I quethe him quyte, and him relese
Of Egypt al the wildirnesse;
To fer were alle my mansiouns
fro alle citees and goode tounes.
My paleis and myn hous make I,
There men may renne in openly,
And sey that I the world forsake.
But al amidde I bilde and make
My hous, and swimme and pley therinne
Bet than a fish doth with his finne.

Of Antecristes men am I,
Of whiche that Crist seith openly,
They have abit of holinesse,
And liven in such wikkednesse.
Outward, lambren semen we,
fulle of goodnesse and of pitee,
And inward we, withouten fable,
Ben gredy wolves ravisable.
We enviroune bothe londe and see;
With al the world werreyen we;
We wol ordeyne of alle thing,
Of folkes good, and her living.

If ther be castel or citee
Wherin that any bougerons be,
Although that they of Milayne
were,

for therof ben they blamed there:
Or if a wight, out of mesure,
Wolde lene his gold, and take usure,
for that he is so covetous:
Or if he be to leccherous,
Or thefe, or haunte simonye;
Or provost, ful of trecherye,
Or prelat, living jolily,
Or prest that halt his quene him by;
Or olde hores hostilers,
Or other bawdes or bordillers,
Or elles blamed of any vyce,
Of whiche men shulden doon justice:
By alle the seyntes that we pray,
But they defende hem with lamprey,
With lucc, with elis, with samons,
With tendre gees, and with capons,
With tartes, or with cheses fat,
With deynte flawnes, brode and flat,
With caleweys, or with pullaille,
With coninges, or with fyn vitaille,
That we, undir our clothes wide,
Maken thurgh our golet glyde:
Or but he wol do come in haste
Roo/venisoun, ybake in paste;
Whether so that he loure or groine,
he shal have of a corde a loigne,

With whiche men shal him binde and lede,
To brenne him for his sinful dede,
That men shulle here him crye and rore
A mylewey aboute, and more.
Or elles he shal in prisoun dye,
But if he wol our frendship bye,
Or smerten that that he hath do,
More than his gilt amounteth to.
But, and he couthe thurgh his sleight
Do maken up a tour of heicht,
Noughtroughte I whether of stone or tree,
Or erthe, or turves though it be,
Though it were of no vounde stone,
Wrought with squyre and scantilone,
So that the tour were stuffed wel
With alle richesse temporel;
And thanne, that he wolde updresse
Engyns, bothe more and lesse,
To caste at us, by every syde,
To bere his goode name wyde,
Such sleighthes as I shal yow nevene,
Barelles of wyne, by sixe or sevene,
Or gold in sakkes gret plente,
he shulde sone delivered be.
And if he have noon sich pitaunces,
Late him study in equipolences,
And lete lyes and fallaces,
If that he wolde deserve our graces;
Or we shal bere him such witnessse
Of sinne, and of his wrecchidnesse,
And doon his loos so wyde renne,
That al quik we shulde him brenne,
Or elles yewe him suche penaunce,
That is wel worse than the pitaunce.

OR thou shalt never, for nothing,
Con knowne aright by her clothing
The traitours fulle of trecherye,
But thou her werkis can aspye.
And ne hadde the good keping be
Whylom of the universitee,
That kepeth the key of Cristendome,
They had been turmented, alle and some.
Suche been the stinking fals prophetis;
Nis non of hem, that good prophete is;
for they, thurgh wikked entencion,
The yere of the incarnacioun
A thousand and two hundred yere,
fye and fifty, ferther ne ner,
broughten a book, with sory grace,
To yeven ensample in comune place,
That seide thus, though it were fable:
This is the Gospel Perdurable,
That fro the Holy Goost is sent.
Wel were it worth to ben ybrent.
Entitled was in such manere
This book, of which I telle here.
Ther nas no wight in al Parrys,
Biforn Our Lady, at parvyys,
That he ne mighte bye the book,
To copy, if him talent took.
Ther might he see, by greet tresoun,
ful many fals comparisoun:

As moche as, thurgh his grete might,
Be it of hete, or of light,
The sunne sourmounteth the mone,
That troubler is, and chaungeth sone,
And the note/kernel the shelle
(I scorne nat that I yow telle)
Right so, withouten any gyle,
Sourmounteth this noble Evangyle
The word of any evangelist.

And to her title they token Christ;
And many such comparisoun,
Of which I make no mencion,
Might men in that boke finde,
Whoso coude of hem have minde.

THE universitee, that tho was
aslepe,
Gan for to braide, and taken kepe;
And at the noys the heed upcaste,
Ne never sithen slepte it faste,
But up it sterte, and armes took
Hyens this fals horrible book,
Al redy bateil for to make,
And to the juge the book to take.
But they that broughten the book there
Hente it anon away, for fere;
They nolde shewe it more a del,
But thenne it kepste, and kepen wil,
Til such a tyme that they may see
That they so stronge woxen be,
That no wight may hem wel withstonde;
for by that book they durst not stonde.

Away they gonne it for to bere,
for they ne durste not answer
By expositioun ne glose
To that that clerkis wole appose
Hyens the cursednesse, ywis,
That in that boke writen is.
Now wot I not, ne I can not see
What maner ende that there shal be
Of al this boke that they hyde;
But yit algate they shal abyde
Til that they may it bet defende;
This trowe I best, wol be hir ende.

THIS Antecrist abyden we,
for we ben alle of his meynce;
And what man that wol not be so,
Right sone he shal his lyf forgo.
We wol a puple on him areyse,
And thurgh our gyle doon him seise,
And him on sharpe speris ryve,
Or other weyes bringe him fro lyve,
But if that he wol folowe, ywis,
That in our boke writen is.

Thus moche wol our book signifye,
That whyl that Peter hath maistrye,
May never Johan shewe wel his might.

OW have I you declared right
The mening of the bark and rinde
That makith the entencionis
blinde.

But now at erst I wol biginne
To expowne you the pith withinne:

And first, by Peter, as I wene,
The Pope himself we wolden mene,
And eek the seculers comprehend,
That Cristes lawe wol defende,
And shulde it hepen and mayntenen
Hecines hem that al sustenen,
And falsly to the puple techen.
And Johan bitokeneth hem that prechen,
That ther nis lawe covenable
But thilke Gospel perdurable,
That fro the Holy Gost was sent
To turne folk that been miswent.
The strengthe of Johan they undirstonde
The grace in which, they seye, they stonde,
That doth the sinful folk converte,
And hem to Jesus Crist reverte.

AL many another horriblete
May men in that boke see,
That ben comaunded, douteles,
Ayens the lawe of Rome expres;
And alle with Antecrist they holden,
As men may in the book biholden.
And than comaunden they to sleen
Alle tho that with Peter been;
But they shal nevere have that might,
And, God toform, for stryff to fight,
That they ne shal ynough men finde
That Peters lawe shal have in minde,
And ever holde, and so mayntene,
That at the last it shal be sene
That they shal alle come therto,
for ought that they can speke or do.
And thilke lawe shal not stonde,
That they by Johan have undirstonde;
But, maugre hem, it shal adoun,
And been brought to confusioun.
But I wol stinte of this matere,
for it is wonder long to here;
But hadde that ilke book endured,
Of better estate I were ensured;
And freendis have I yit, pardee,
That han me set in greet degree.

Of all this world is emperour
Gyle my fader, the trechour,
And emperesse my moder is,
Maugre the Holy Gost, ywis.
Our mighty linage and our route
Regneth in every regne aboute;
And wel is worth we maistres be,
for al this world governe we,
And can the folk so wel disceyve,
That noon our gyle can perceyve;
And though they doon, they dar not saye;
The sothe dar no wight biweye.
But he in Cristis wrath him ledeth,
That more than Crist my bretheren
dredeth.

He nis no ful good champioun,
That dredith such simulacioun;
Nor that for peyne wole refusen
As to correcten and accusen.

He wol not entremete by right,
Ne have God in his eyesight,
And therefore God shal him punyce:
But me ne rekketh of no vyce,
Sithen men us loven comunably,
And holden us for so worthy,
That we may folk repreve echoon,
And we nil have repref of noon.
Whom shulden folk worshipen so
But us, that stinten never mo
To patren whyl that folk us see,
Though it not so bihinde hem be?

AND where is more wood folye,
Than to enhaunce chivalrye,
And love noble men and gay,
That joly clothis weren alway?
If they be sich folk as they semen,
So clene, as men her clothis demen,
And that her wordis folowe her dede,
It is gret pite, out of drede,
for they wol be noon ypoctis!
Of hem, me thinketh it gret spite is;
I can not love hem on no syde.
But Beggars with these hodes wyde,
With sleighe and pale faces lene,
And greye clothis not ful clene,
But fretted ful of tatarwagges,
And highe shoes, knopped with dagges,
That frouncen lyke a quaile/pype,
Or botes riving as a gype;
To such folk as I you devyse
Shuld princes and these lordes wyse
Take alle her londes and her thinges,
Bothe werre and pees, in governinges;
To such folk shulde a prince him yive,
That wolde his lyf in honour live,
And if they be not as they seme,
That serven thus the world to queme,
There wolde I dwelle, to disceyve
The folk, for they shal not perceyve.

BUT I ne speke in no such wyse,
That men shulde humble abit
dispyse,
So that no pryde therunder be.
No man shulde hate, as thinketh me,
The pore man in sich clothing.
But God ne preiseth him nothing,
That seith he hath the world forsake,
And hath to worldly glorie him take,
And wol of sicche delycles use;
Who may that Begger wel excuse?
That papelard, that him yeldeth so,
And wol to worldly ese go,
And seith that he the world hath left,
And gredily it gryppeth eft,
He is the hound, shame is to seyn,
That to his casting goth ageyn.

BUT unto you dar I not lye:
But mighte I felen or aspye,
That ye perceyved it nothing,
Ye shulden have a stark lesing
Right in your hond thus, to beginne,

Inolde it lette for no sinne.

THE god lough at the wonder tho,
And every wight gan laughe also,
And seide: Lo here a man aright
For to be trusty to every wight!

AL S/SEMBLANT, quod Love,
sey to me,
Sith I thus have avaunced thee,
That in my court is thy dwelling,
And of ribaudes shalt be my king,
Molt thou wel holden my for-

wardis?

False Semblant.

Sir, from hennes forwardis;
Hadde never your fader herebiforn
Seraunt so trewe, sith he was born.
Amour. That is ayeines al nature.

False Semblant.

SIR, put you in that aventure;
For though ye borowes take of me,
The sikkerer shal ye never be
for ostages, ne sikkinnesse,
Or chartres, for to bere witnessse.
I take yourself to record here,
That men ne may, in no manere,
Ceren the wolf out of his hyde,
Till he be flayn, bak and syde,
Though men him bete and al defyle;
What? wene ye that I wole bigyle?
for I am clothed mekely,
Therunder is al my trechery;
Myn herte chaungeth never the mo
for noon abit, in which I go.
Though I have chere of simplenesse,
I am not wery of shrewednesse.
My lemman, Streyned/Abstinence,
hath mistere of my purveaunce;
She hadde ful longe ago be deed,
Nere my councel and my reed;
lete hir allone, and you and me.

**Streyned/
Abstinence**

AND Love answerde: I truste thee
Withoute borowe, for I wol noon.
And fals Semblant, the theef,

amoon,
Right in that ilke same place,
That hadde of tresoun al his face
Right blak withinne, and whyt withoute,
Thanketh him, gan on his knees loute.

HAN was ther nought, but
Every man
Now to assaut, that sailen
can,
Quod Love, and that ful
hardily.

Chan armed they hem communly
Of sich armour as to hem fel.
Whan they were armed, fers and fel,
They wente hem forth, alle in a route,
And set the castel al aboute;
They wil nought away, for no drede,
Till it so be that they ben dede,
Or till they have the castel take.

And foure batels they gan make,
And parted hem in foure anoon,
And toke her way, and forth they goon,
The foure gates for to assaile,
Of whiche the keepers wol not faile;
for they ben neither syke ne dede,
But hardy folk, and strong in dede.

AWOLE I seyn the counte-
naunce
Of fals Semblant, and
Abstinence,
That ben to Wikkid/Tonge
went.

But first they helde her parlement,
Whether it to done were
To maken hem be knowen there,
Or elles walken forth disgyssed.
But at the laste they devysed,
That they wold goon in tapinage,
As it were in a pilgrimage,
Lyk good and holy folk unfeyned.
And Dame Abstinence/Streyned
Took on a robe of camelyne,
And gan hir graithe as a Begyne.
A large coverchief of threde
She wrapped al aboute hir hede,
But she forgat not hir sautere;
A peire of bedis eek she bere
Upon a lace, al of whyt threde,
On which that she hir bedes bede;
But she ne boughte hem never a del,
for they were geven her, I wot wel,
God wot, of a ful holy frere,
That seide he was hir fader dere,
To whom she hadde ofter went
Than any frere of his covent.

And he visyted hir also,
And many a sermoun seide hir to;
He nolde lette, for man on lyve,
That he ne wolde hir ofte shryve.
And with so gret devocioun
They maden her confession,
That they had ofte, for the nones,
Two hedes in one hood at ones.

Of fair shape I devyse her thee,
But pale of face somtyme was
she;

That false traitouresse untrew
Was lyk that salowe hors of hewe,
That in the Apocalips is shewed,
That signifyeth tho folk beshrewed,
That been al ful of trecherye,
And pale, thurgh hypocrisie;
for on that hors no colour is,
But only deed and pale, ywis.
Of suche a colour enlangoured
Was Abstinence, ywis, coloured;
Of her estat she her repented,
As her visage represented.

SHE had a burdoun al of Theft,
That Gyle had yeve her of his
yefte;

And a scrippe of faine Distresse,
That ful was of elengesse,
And forth she walked sobrelly:
And false Semblant saynt, je vous die,
Had, as it were for such mistere,
Don on the cope of a frere,
With chere simple, and ful pitous;
His looking was not disdeinous,
Ne proud, but meke and ful pesible.
About his nekke he bar a bible,
And squierly forth gan he gon;
And, for to reste his limmes upon,
He had of Treson a potente;
As he were feble, his way he wente.
But in his sleve he gan to thringe
A rasour sharp, and wel bytinge,
That was forged in a forge,
Which that men clepen Coupegorge.

SO longe forth hir way they nomen,
Til they to Wicked/Tonge comen,
That at his gate was sitting,
And saw folk in the way passing.
The pilgrymes saw he faste by,
That beren hem ful mekely,
And humbly they with him mette.
Dame Abstinence first him grette,
And sith him false Semblant salued,
And he hem; but he not remued,
for he ne dredde hem not a del.
for when he saw hir faces wel,
Alway in herte him thoughte so,
He shulde knowe hem bothe two;
for wel he knew Dame Abstinence,
But he ne knew not Constreynance.
He knew nat that she was constreyned,
Ne of her theves lyfe feyned,
But wende she com of wil al free;
But she com in another degree;
And if of good wil she began,
That wil was failed her as than.

AND fals Semblant had he seyn als,
But he knew nat that he was fals.
Yet fals was he, but his falsnesse
Ne coude he not espye, nor gesse;
for semblant was so slye wrought,
That falsnesse he ne espyed nought.
But hadde thou knowen him biforn,
Thou woldest on a boke have sworn,
Than thou him saugh in thilke aray
That he, that whylom was so gay,
And of the daunce Joly Robin,
Was tho become a Jacobin.
But sothely, what so men him calle,
freres Prechours been good men alle;
Hir order wickedly they beren,
Suche minstrelles if that they weren.
So been Augustins and Cordileres,
And Carmes, and eek Sakked freres,
And alle freres, shodde and bare,
(Though some of hem ben grete and square),
ful holy men, as I hem deme;

Everich of hem wolde good man seme.
But shalt thou never of apparence
Seen conclude good consequence
In none argument, ywis,
If existence al failed is.

WHAN the pilgrymes comen were
To Wicked/Tonge, that dwelled
there,

Hir harnais nigh hem was algate;
By Wicked/Tonge adoun they sate,
That bad hem ner him for to come,
And of tydinges telle him some,
And sayde hem: What cas maketh yow
To come into this place now?

SIR, seyde Strained/Abstinence,
We, for to drye our penaunce,
With hertes pitous and devoute,
Are comen, as pilgrymes gon aboute;
Wel nigh on fote alway we go;
ful dusty been our heles two;
And thus bothe we ben sent
Thurghout this world that is miswent,
To yve ensample, and preche also.
To fasshen sinful men we go,
for other fasshing ne fasshe we.
And, sir, for that charitee,
As we be wont, herberwe we crave,
Your lyf to amende; Crist it save!
And, so it shulde you nat displese,
We wolden, if it were your ese,
A short sermoun unto you seyn.
And Wicked/Tonge answerde ageyn:
The hous, quod he, such as ye see,
Shal nat be warned you for me,
Sey what you list, and I wol here.
Graunt mercy, swete sire dere!
Quod alderfirst Dame Abstinence,
And thus began she hir sentence:
Constreyned/Abstinence.

SIR, the first vertue, certeyn,
The gretest, and most sovereyn
That may be founde in any man,
for having, or for wit he can,
That is, his tonge to refreyne;
Therto ought every wight him peyne.
for it is better stille be
Than for to speken harm, pardee!
And he that herkeneth it gladly,
He is no good man, sikerly.
And, sir, aboven al other sinne,
In that art thou most gilty inne.
Thou spake a jape not long ago,
And, sir, that was right yvel do,
Of a yong man that here repaired,
And never yet this place apaired.
Thou seydest he awaited nothing
But to disceyve fair Welcoming.
Ye seyde nothing sooth of that;

But, sir, ye lye; I tell you plat;
He ne cometh no more, ne goth, pardee!
I trow ye shal him never see.
fair Welcoming in prison is,
That ofte hath pleyed with you, er this,
The fairest games that he coude,
Withoute filthe, stille or loude;
Withoute he nat himself solace.
Now dar he nat himself do chace,
Ye han also the man do chace,
That he dar neither come ne go.
What meveth you to hate him so
But properly your wikked thought,
That many a fals lesing hath thought?
That meveth your foole eloquence,
That jangleth ever in audience,
And on the folk areyseth blame,
And doth hem dishonour and shame,
For thing that may have no preying,
But lyknesse, and contriving,
for I dar seyn, that Reson demeth,
It is not al sooth thing that semeth,
And it is sinne to contrive
Ching that is for to reprove;
This wot ye wel; and, sir, therefore
Ye arn to blame wel the more.
And, nathelesse, he reketh lyte;
He yeveth nat now thereof a myte;
for if he thoughte harm, parfay,
He wolde come and gon al day;
He coude himselfe nat abstene.
Now cometh he nat, and that is sene,
for he ne taketh of it no cure,
But if it be through aventure,
And lasse than other folk, algate.
And thou here watchest at the gate,
With spere in thynne arest alway;
There muse, musard, al the day.
Thou wakest night and day for thought;
Ywis, thy travayl is for nought.
And jelousye, withouten faile,
Shal never quyte thee thy travaile.
And scathe is, that fair Welcoming,
Withouten any trespassing,
Shal wrongfully in prison be,
Ther wepeth and languissbeth he.
And though thou never yet, ywis,
Agiltest man no more but this,
Take not agreef, it were worthy
To putte thee out of this baily,
And afterward in prison lye,
And fettre thee til that thou dye;
for thou shalt for this sinne dwelle
Right in the devils ers of helle,
But if that thou repent thee.

WHAY, thou lvest falsly! quod he.
What? welcome with mischaunce
now!
have I therfore herbered you
To seye me shame, and eek reprove?
With sory happe, to your bihove,
Am I today your herbergerel
Go, herber you elleswhere than here,

That han a lyer called me!
Two tregetours art thou and he,
That in myn hous do me this shame,
And for my sothsawe ye me blame.
Is this the sermoun that ye make?
To alle the develles I me take,
Or elles, God, thou me confounde!
But er men diden this castel founde,
It passeth not ten dayes or twelve,
But it was told right to myselve,
And as they seide, right so tolde I,
He kiste the Rose privily!
Thus seide I now, and have seid yore;
I not wher he hided any more.
Why shulde men sey me such a thing,
If it hadde been gabbing?
Right so seide I, and wol seye yit;
I trowe, I lved not of it;
And with my bemes I wol blowe
To alle neighboris a Rowe,
How he hath bothe comen and gon.

WHO spak fals Semblant right
anon,
Al is not gospel, out of doute,
That men seyn in the toune aboute;
Ley no deaf ere to my speking;
I swere yow, sir, it is gabbing!
I trowe ye wot wel certeynly,
That no man loveth him tenderly
That seith him harm, if he wot it,
Al be he never so pore of wit.
And sooth is also sikerly,
This knowe ye, sir, as wel as I,
That lovers gladly wol visyten
The places ther hir loves habytten.
This man you loveth and eek honoureth;
This man to serve you labourerth;
And clepeth you his freend so dere,
And this man maketh you good chere,
And everywher that he you meteth,
He you saleweth, and he you greteth.
He preseth not so ofte, that ye
Ought of his come encombred be;
Ther presen other folk on yow
ful ofter than that he doth now.
And if his herte him streyned so
Unto the Rose for to go,
Ye shulde him seen so ofte nede,
That ye shulde take him with the dede.
He coude his coming not forbere,
Though ye him thrilled with a spere;
It nere not thanne as it is now.
But trusteth wel, I swere it yow,
That it is clene out of his thought.
Sir, certes, he ne thenketh it nought;
No more ne doth fair Welcoming,
That sore abyeth al this thing.
And if they were of oon assent,
ful sone were the Rose hent;
The maugre youres wolde be.
And sir, of o thing herkeneth me:
Sith ye this man, that loveth yow,



Han seid such harm and shame now,
Witeth wel, if he gessed it,
Ye may wel demen in your wit,
He nolde nothing love you so,
Ne callen you his freend also,
But night and day he wolde wake,
The castel to destroye and take,
If it were sooth as ye devyse;
Or som man in som maner wyse
Might it warne him everydel,
Or by himself perceyven wel;
for sith he might not come and gon
As he was whylom wont to don,
He might it sone wite and see;
But now al otherwyse doth he.
Than have ye, sir, al outerly
Deserved helle, and jolyly
The deth of helle, douteles,
That thrallen folk so gilteles.

FALS SEMBLANT proveth so
this thing
That he can noon answering,
And seeth alwey such apparaunce,
That nygh he fel in repentaunce,
And seide him: Sir, it may wel be.
Sembant, a good man semen ye;
And, Abstinence, ful wyse ye seme;
Of o talent you bothe I deme.

What counceyl wole ye to me yeven?

Fals Semblant.

RIGHT here anon thou shalt be
shriven,
And sey thy sinne withoute more;
Of this shalt thou repente sore;
for I am preest, and have poustee
To shryve folk of most dignitee
That been, as wyde as world may dure.
Of al this world I have the cure,
And that had never yit persoun,
No vicarie of no maner toun.
And, God wot, I have of thee
A thousand tymes more pitee
Than hath thy preest parochial,
Though he thy freend be special.
I have avauntage, in o wyse,
That your prelates ben not so wyse
Ne half so lettred as am I.
I am licenced boldely
In divinitee to rede,
And to confessen, out of drede.
If ye wol you now confesse,
And leve your sinnes more and lesse,
Without abood, knele down anon,
And you shal have absolucion.

**Here ends all that is done of The Romance
of the Rose.**



THE PARLEMENT OF FOULES THE PROEM.

The

LYF SO SHORT, THE CRAFT SO LONG
to lerne,
Chassay so hard, so sharp the conquering,
The dredful joy, that alwey slit so yerne,
Al this mene I by love, that my feling
Astonyeth with his wonderful worching
So sore ywis, that whan I on him thinke,
Nat wot I wel wher that I wake or winke.

for al be that I knowe not love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quytteth folk hir hyre,
Yet happeth me ful ofte in bokes rede
Of his miracles, and his cruel yre;
Ther rede I wel he wol be lord and syre,
I dar not seyn, his strokes been so sore,
But God save swich a lord! I can no more.

Of usage, what for luste what for lore,
On bokes rede I ofte, as I yow tolde.
But wherfor that I speke al this? not yore
Agon, hit happed me for to beholde
Upon a boke, was write with lettres olde;
And therupon, a certeyn thing to lerne,
The longe day ful faste I radde and yerne.

for out of olde feldes, as men seith,
Cometh al this newe corn fro yere to yere;
And out of olde bokes, in good feith,
Cometh al this newe science that men lere.
But now to purpos as of this matere...
To rede forth hit gan me so delyte,
That al the day me thoughte but a lyte.

This book of which I make mencoun,
Entitled was al thus, as I shal telle,
Tullius of the dreame of Scipion;

The
Parlement
of foules

Chapitres seven hit hadde, of hevene and helle,
And erthe, and soules that therinne dwelle,
Of whiche, as shortly as I can hit trete,
Of his sentence I wol you seyn the grete.

first telleth hit, whan Scipioun was come
In Afrik, how he mette Massinisse,
That him for joye in armes hath ynome.
Than telleth hit hir speche and al the blisse
That was betwix hem, til the day gan misse;
And how his auncestre, African so dere,
Gan in his slepe that night to him appere.

Than telleth hit that, fro a sterry place,
How African hath him Cartage shewed,
And warned him before of al his grace,
And seyde him, what man, lered other lewed,
That loveth comun profit, wel ythewed,
He shal unto a blisful place wende,
Ther as joye is that last withouten ende.

Than asked he, if folk that heer be dede
Have tyf and dwelling in another place;
And African seyde: Ye, withoute drede,
And that our present worldes lyves space
Nis but a maner deth, what wey we trace,
And rightful folk shal go, after they dye,
To heven; and shewed him the galaxye.

Than shewed he him the litel erthe, that
heer is,
At regard of the hevenes quantite;
And after shewed he him the nyne speres,
And after that the melodye herde he
That cometh of thilke speres thryes three,
That welle is of musyke and melodye
In this world heer, and cause of armonye.

Than bad he him, sin erthe was so lyte,
And ful of torment and of harde grace,
That he ne shulde him in the world delyte.
Than tolde he him, in certeyn yeres space,
That every sterre shulde come into his place
Ther hit was first; and al shulde out of minde
That in this world is don of al mankinde.

Than prayde him Scipioun to telle him al
The wey to come unto that hevene blisse;
And he seyde: Know thyself first immortal,
And loke ay besily thou werke and wisse
To comun profit, and thou shalt nat misse
To comen swiftly to that place dere,
That ful of blisse is and of soules clere.

But brekers of the lawe, soth to seyne,
And lecherous folk, after that they be dede,
Shul alwey whirle aboute therthe in payne,
Til many a world be passed, out of drede,
And than, foryeven alle hir wikked dede,
Than shul they come unto that blisful place,
To which to comen God thee sende his grace!

The day gan failen, and the derke night,
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That reveth bestes from hir besinesse,
Berafte me my book for lakke of light,
And to my bedde I gan me for to dresse,
fulfid of thought and besy hevinesse;
for bothe I hadde thing which that I nolde,
And eek I ne hadde that thing that I wolde.

But fynally my spirit, at the laste,
forwery of my labour al the day,
Took rest, that made me to slepe faste,
And in my slepe I mette, as I lay,
How African, right in that selfe aray
That Scipioun him saw before that tyde,
Was comen, and stood right at my beddes syde.

The very hunter, slepinge in his bed,
To wode ayen his minde goth anon;
The juge dremeth how his ples ben sped;
The carter dremeth how his cartes goon;
The riche, of gold; the knight fight with his foon,
The seke met he drinketh of the tonne;
The lover met he hath his lady wonne.

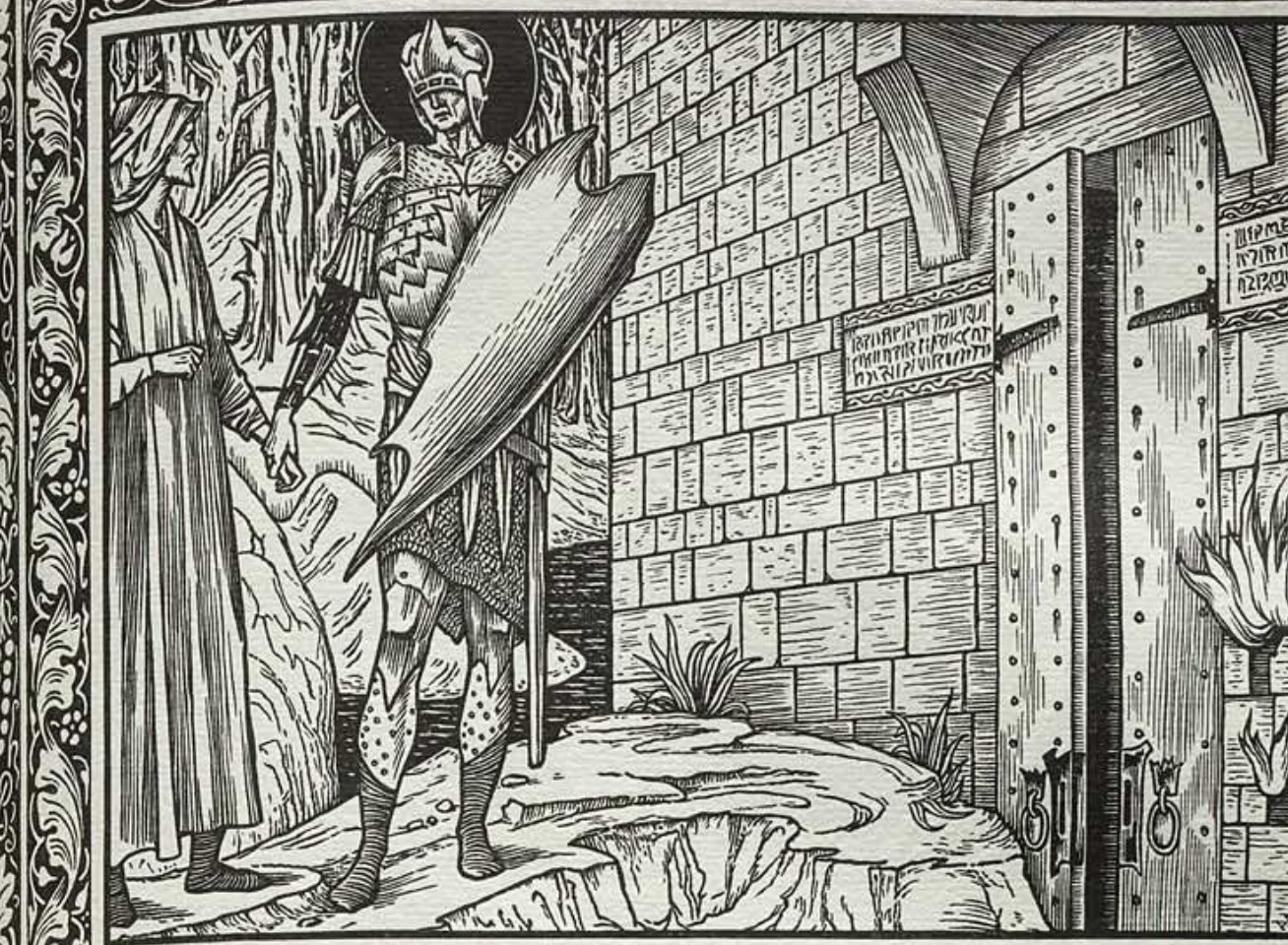
Can I nat seyn if that the cause were
for I had red of African befor,
That made me to mete that he stood there;
But thus seyde he: Thou hast thee so wel born
In lokyng of myn olde book totorn,
Of which Macrobie roghte nat a lyte,
That somdel of thy labour wolde I quyte!

Citherea! thou blisful lady swete,
That with thy fyr brand dauntest whom thee
lest,
And madest me this sweven for to mete,
Be thou my help in this, for thou mayst best;
As wisly as I saw thee north/northwest,
When I began my sweven for to wryte,
So yif me might to ryme hit and endyte!

The Story.

HIS forseid African me hente
anoon,
And forth with him unto a gate
broghte
Right of a parke, walled with
grene stoon;
And over the gate, with lettres large ywroghte,
Ther weren vers ywriten, as me thoghte,
On eyther halfe, of ful gret difference,
Of which I shal yow sey the pleyn sentence.

Thorgh me men goon into that blisful
place
Of hertes hele and dedly woundes cure;
Thorgh me men goon unto the welle of Grace,
Ther grene and lusty May shal ever endure;
This is the wey to al good aventure;
Be glad, thou reder, and thy sorwe of caste,
Al open am I; passe in, and hy thee faste!



Thorgh me men goon, than spak that
other syde,
Unto the mortal strokes of the spere,
Of which Disdayn and Daunger is the gyde,
Ther tree shal never fruyt ne leves bere.
This stream you ledeth to the sorful were,
Ther as the fish in prison is al drye;
Theschewing is only the remedye.

Thise vers of gold and blak ywriten were,
The whiche I gan a stounde to beholde,
for with that oon encreased ay my fere,
And with that other gan myn herte bolde;
That oon me hette, that other did me colde,
No wit had I, for errour, for to chese,
To entre or fle, or me to save or lese.

Right as, betwixen adamauntes two
Of even might, a pece of iren yset,
That hath no might to meve to ne fro,
for what that on may hale, that other let,
ferde I, that niste whether me was bet,
To entre or leve, til African my gyde
Me hente, and shoof in at the gates wyde,

And seyde: Hit stondeh written in thy face,
Thyn errour, though thou telle it not to me;
But dred thee nat to come into this place,

for this wryting is nothing ment by thee,
Ne by noon, but he Loves servant be;
for thou of love hast lost thy tast, I gesse,
As seek man hath of swete and bitternesse.

But natheles, although that thou be dulle,
Yit that thou canst not do, yit mayst thou
see;
for many a man that may not stonde a pulle,
Yit lyketh him at the wrastling for to be,
And demeth yit wher he do bet or he;
And if thou haddest cunning for tendyte,
I shal thee shewen mater of to wryte.

With that my hond in his he took anon,
Of which I comfort caughte, and wente in
faste;
But lord! so I was glad and wel begoon!
for overal, wher that I myn eyen caste,
Were trees clad with leves that ay shal laste,
Eche in his kinde, of colour fresh and grene
As emeraude, that joye was to sene.

The bilder ook, and eek the hardy asshe;
The piler elm, the cofre unto careyne;
The boxtree piper; holm to whippes lasshe;
The sayling fir; the cipres, deth to pleyne;
The sheter ew, the asp for shaftes pleyne;



The olyve of pees, and eek the drunken vyne,
The victor palm, the laurer to devyne.

A garden saw I, ful of blosmy bowes,
Upon a river, in a grene mede,
Ther as that swetnesse evermore ynow is,
With floures whyte, blew, yelow, and rede;
And colde welles/stremes, nothing dede,
That swommen ful of smale fisses lighte,
With finnes rede and scales silver/brighte.

On every bough the briddes herde I singe,
With voys of aungel in hir armonye,
Som beseyd hem hir briddes forth to bringe;
The litel conyes to hir pley gunne hie,
And further al aboute I gan espie
The dredful roo, the buk, the hert and hinde,
Squerels, and bestes smale of gentil kinde.

Of instruments of strenges in acord
Herde I so pleye a ravissching swetnesse,
That God, that maker is of al and lord,
Ne herde never better, as I gesse;
Therwith a wind, unnethe hit might be lesse,
Made in the leves grene a noise softe
Acordant to the foules songe on/lofte.

The air of that place so attempre was

That never was grevaunce of hoot ne cold;
Ther wex eek every holsom spyce and gras,
Ne no man may ther were seek ne old;
Yet was ther joye more a thousand fold
Then man can telle; ne never wolde it nighte,
But ay cleer day to any mannes sighte.

Under a tree, besyde a welle, I saw
Cupyd our lord his arwes forge and fyle;
And at his fete his bowe al redy lay,
And wel his doghter tempred al the while
The hedes in the welle, and with hir wyle
She couched hem after as they shulde serve,
Som for to slee, and som to wounde and herve.

Tho was I war of Plesaunce anon/right,
And of Aray, and Lust, and Curtesye;
And of the Craft that can and bath the might
To doon by force a wight to do folye,
Disfigurat was she, I nil not lye;
And by himself, under an oke, I gesse,
Sawe I Delyt, that stood with Gentilnesse.

I saw Beautee, withouten any atyr,
And Youthe, ful of game and jolyte,
fool/hardinesse, flatery, and Desyr,
Messagerye, and Mede, and other thre,
Hir names shul noght here be told for me.



And upon pilers grete of jasper longe
I saw a temple of bras yfounded stronge.

Aboute the temple daunceden alway
Wommen ynowe, of whiche somme ther were
faire of hemself, and somme of hem were gay;
In hirtels, al disshevele, wente they there,
That was hir office alway, yeer by yeer,
And on the temple, of doves whyte and faire
Saw I sittinge many a hundred paire.

Before the temple/dore ful soberly
Dame Pees sat, with a curteyn in hir bond;
And hir besyde, wonder discretly,
Dame Pacience sitting ther I fond
With face pale, upon an hille of sond;
And alder next, within and eek withoute,
Behest and Art, and of hir folke a route.

Within the temple, of syghes hote as fyr
I herde a swogh that gan aboute renne;
Which syghes were engendred with desyr,
That maden every auter for to brenne
Of newe flaume; and wel aspyed I thenne
That al the cause of sorwes that they drye
Com of the bitter goddesse Jalousye.

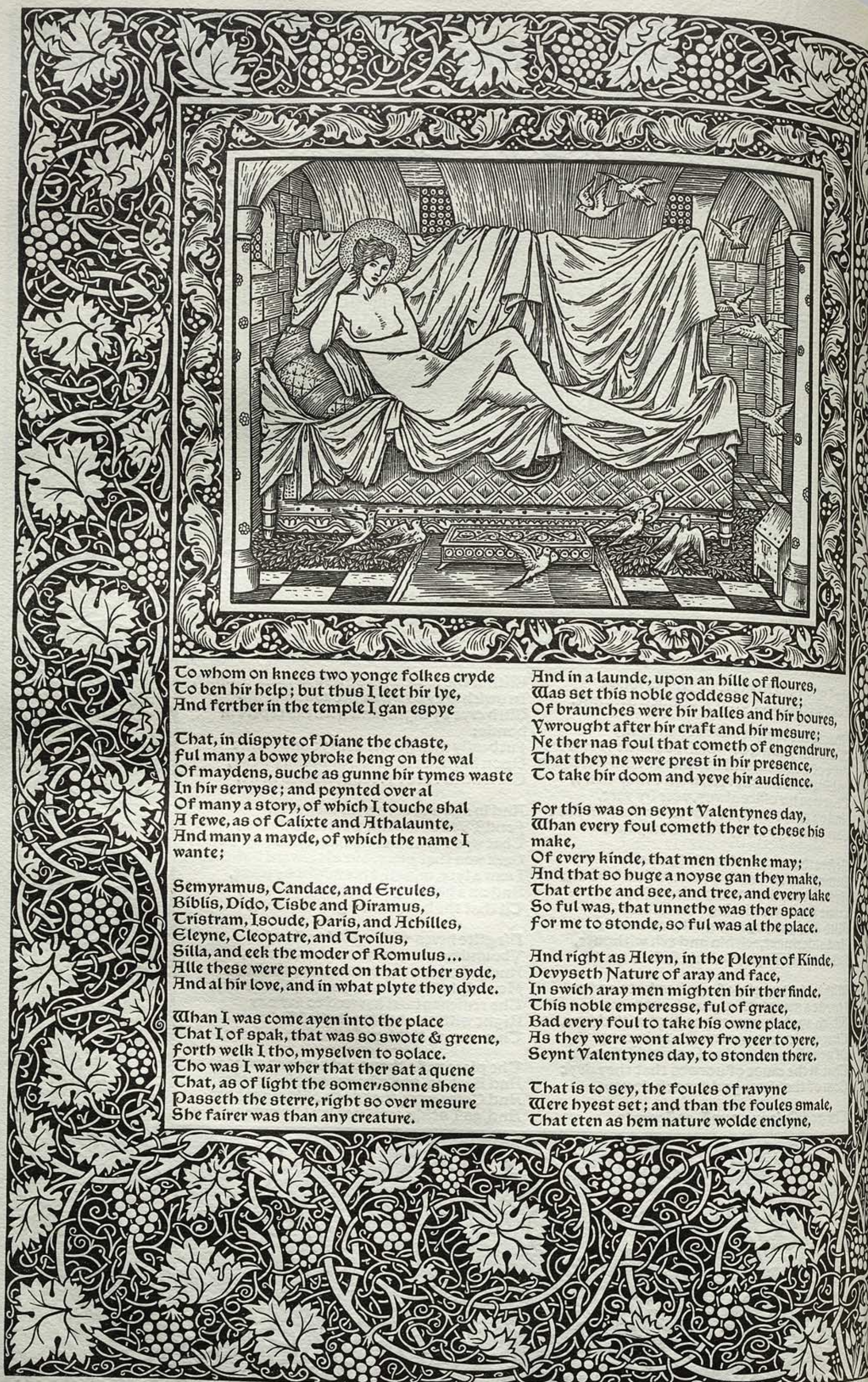
The god Priapus saw I, as I wente,

Within the temple, in soverayn place stonde,
In swich aray as whan the asse him shente
With crye by night, and with his ceptre in
honde;
ful besily men gunne assaye and fonde
Upon his hede to sette, of sondry hewe,
Garlondes ful of fresshe floures newe.

And in a privee corner, in disporte,
fond I Venus and hir porter Richesse,
That was ful noble and hauteyn of hir porte;
Derk was that place, but afterward lightnesse
I saw a lyte, unnethe hit might be lesse,
And on a bed of golde she lay to reste,
Til that the hote sonne gan to waste.

Hir gilte heres with a golden threde
Ybounden were, untressed as she lay,
And naked fro the breste unto the hede
Men might hir see; and, sothly for to say,
The remenant wel kevered to my pay
Right with a subtil kerchief of Valence,
Ther was no thikker cloth of no defence.

The place yaf a thousand savours swote,
And Bachus, god of wyn, sat hir besyde,
And Ceres next, that doth of hunger bote;
And, as I seide, amidde lay Cipryde,



To whom on knees two yonge folkes cryde
To ben hir help; but thus I leet hir lye,
And ferther in the temple I gan espye

That, in dispyte of Diane the chaste,
ful many a bowe ybroke heng on the wal
Of maydens, suche as gunne hir tymes waste
In hir servyse; and peynted over al
Of many a story, of which I touche shal
A fewe, as of Calixte and Athalaunte,
And many a mayde, of which the name I
wante;

Semyramus, Candace, and Ercules,
Biblis, Dido, Tisbe and Piramus,
Tristram, Isoude, Paris, and Achilles,
Eleyne, Cleopatre, and Troilus,
Silla, and eek the moder of Romulus...
Alle these were peynted on that other syde,
And al hir love, and in what plyte they dyde.

Whan I was come ayen into the place
That I of spak, that was so swote & greene,
forth welk I tho, myselfen to solace.
Tho was I war wher that ther sat a quene
That, as of light the somer/sonne shene
Passeth the sterre, right so over mesure
She fairer was than any creature.

And in a launde, upon an hille of floures,
Was set this noble goddess Nature;
Of braunches were hir halles and hir boures,
Ywrought after hir craft and hir mesure;
Ne ther nas foul that cometh of engendrure,
That they ne were prest in hir presence,
To take hir doom and yewe hir audience.

for this was on seynt Valentynes day,
Whan every foul cometh ther to chese his
make,
Of every kinde, that men thenke may;
And that so huge a noyse gan they make,
That erthe and see, and tree, and every lake
So ful was, that unnethe was ther space
for me to stonde, so ful was al the place.

And right as Aleyn, in the Pleynt of Kinde,
Devyseth Nature of aray and face,
In swich aray men mighten hir ther finde.
This noble emperesse, ful of grace,
Bad every foul to take his owne place,
As they were wont alwey fro yere to yere,
Seynt Valentynes day, to stonden there.

That is to sey, the foules of ravyne
Were hyest set; and than the foules smale,
That eten as hem nature wolde enclyne,

As worm, or thing of whiche I telle no tale;
But waterfoul sat lowest in the dale;
And foul that liveth by seed sat on the grene,
And that so fele, that wonder was to sene.

Ther mighte men the royal egle finde,
That with his sharpe look perceth the sonne;
And other egles of a lower kinde,
Of which that clerkes wel devysen conne.
Ther was the tyraunt with his fethres donne
And greye, I mene the goshawk, that doth pyne
To briddes for his outrageous ravyne.

The gentil faucon, that with his feet distreyneth
The kinges hond; the hardy sperhawk eke,
The quayles foo; the merlion that peyneth
Himself ful ofte, the lark for to seke;
Ther was the douve, with hir eyen meke;
The jalous swan, ayens his deth that singeth;
The oule eek, that of dethe the bode bringeth;

The crane the geaunt, with his trompes soun;
The theef, the chogh; and eek the jangling pye;
The scorning jay; the eles foo, the heroune;
The false lapwing, ful of trecherye;
The stawe, that the counseyl can bewrye;
The tame ruddok; and the coward kyte;
The cok, that orloge is of thorpes lyte;

The sparrow, Venus sone; the nightingale,
That clepeth forth the fresshe leves newe;
The swallow, morderer of the flyes smale
That maken hony of floures fresshe of hewe;
The wedded turtel, with hir herte trewe;
The peccok, with his angels fethres brighte;
The fesaunt, scormer of the cok by nighte;

The waker goos; the kukkow ever unkinde;
The popinjay, ful of delicasye;
The drake, stroyer of his owne kinde;
The stork, the wreker of avouterie;
The hote cormeraunt of glotonye;
The raven wys, the crow with vois of care;
The throstel olde; the frosty feldefare.

What shulde I seyn? of foules every kinde
That in this worlde han fethres and stature,
Men mighten in that place assembled finde
Before the noble goddess Nature.
And everich of hem did his besy cure
Benignely to chese or for to take,
By hir acord, his formel or his make.

But to the poynt... Nature held on hir honde
A formel egle, of shap the gentileste
That ever she among hir werkes fonde,
The most benigne and the goodlieste;
In hir was every vertu at his reste,
So ferforth, that Nature herself had blisse
To loke on hir, and ofte hir bek to kisse.

Nature, the vicaire of thalmyghty lorde,
That hoot, cold, hevvy, light, and moist and dreye

Bath knit by even noubre of acorde,
In esy vois began to speke and seye:
foules, tak hede of my sentence, I preye,
And, for your ese, in furthering of your nede,
As faste as I may speke, I wol me spede.

Ye know wel how, seynt Valentynes day,
By my statut and through my governaunce,
Ye come for to chese, and flee your way,
Your makes, as I prik yow with plesaunce.
But natheles, my rightful ordenaunce
May I not lete, for al this world to winne,
That he that most is worthy shal beginne.

The tercel egle, as that ye knowen wel,
The foul royal above yow in degree,
The wyse and worthy, secree, trewe as stel,
The which I formed have, as ye may see,
In every part as hit best lyketh me,
Hit nedeth noght his shap yow to devyse,
He shal first chese and speken in his gyse.

And after him, by order shul ye chese,
After your kinde, everich as yow lyketh,
And, as your hap is, shul ye winne or lese;
But which of yow that love most entryketh,
God sende him hir that sorest for him syketh.
And therewithal the tercel gan she calle,
And seyde: My sone, the choys is to thee falle.

But natheles, in this condicioun
Mot be the choys of everich that is here,
That she agree to his eleccioun,
Whoso he be that shulde been hir fere;
This is our usage alwey, fro yere to yere;
And who so may at this time have his grace,
In blisful tyme he com into this place.

With hed enclyned and with ful humble chere
This royal tercel spak and taried nought:
Unto my sovereyn lady, and noght my fere,
I chese, and chese with wille and herte & thought,
The formel on your hond so wel ywrought,
Whos I am al and ever wol hir serve,
Do what hir list, to do me live or sterve.

Beseching hir of mercy and of grace,
As she that is my lady sovereyne;
Or let me dye present in this place.
for certes, long may I not live in peyne;
for in myn herte is corven every veyne;
Having reward al only to my trouthe,
My dere herte, have on my wo som routh.

And if that I to hir be founde untrew,
Disobeysaunt, or wilful negligent,
Hvauntour, or in proces love a newe,
I pray to you this be my jugement,
That with these foules I be al forent,
That ilke day that ever she me finde
To hir untrew, or in my gylte unkinde.

And sin that noon loveth hir so wel as I,

**The
Parlement
of fowles**

Al be she never of love me behette,
Than oghte she be myn thourgh hir mercy,
for other bond can I noon on hir knette.
for never, for no wo, ne shal I lette
to serven hir, how fer so that she wende;
sey what yow list, my tale is at an ende.

¶ Right as the fresshe, rede rose newe
Aven the somer/sonne coloured is,
Right so for shame al wexen gan the hewe
Of this formel, whan that she herde al this;
She neyther answerde Wel, ne seyde amis,
So sore abasshed was she, til that Nature
seyde, Doghter, drede yow noght, I yow
assure.

¶ Another tercel egle spak anon
Of lower kinde, and seyde: That shal not be;
I love hir bet than ye do, by seynt John,
Or atte leste I love hir as wel as ye;
And lenger have served hir, in my degree,
And if she shulde have loved for long loving,
To me allone had been the guerdoning.

I dar eek seye, if she me finde fals,
Unkinde, jangler, or rebel any wyse,
Or jalous, do me hongen by the hals!
And but I bere me in hir servyse
As wel as that my wit can me suffyse,
fro poynt to poynt, hir honour for to save,
Tak she my lyf, and al the good I have.

¶ The thridde tercel egle answerde tho:
Now, sirs, ye seen the litel leyser here;
for every foul cryeth out to been ago
forth with his make, or with his lady dere;
And eek Nature herself ne wol nought here,
for taryng here, noght half that I wolde seye;
And but I speke, I mot for sorwe deye.

Of long servyse avaunte I me nothing,
But as possible is me to dye today
for wo, as he that hath ben languisshing
Thise twenty winter, and wel happen may
A man may serven bet and more to pay
In half a yere, although hit were no more,
Than som man doth that hath served ful yore.

I ne say not this by me, for I ne can
Do no servyse that may my lady plesse;
But I dar seyn, I am hir trewest man
As to my dome, and feynest wolde hir ese;
At shorte wordes, til that deth me sese,
I wol ben hires, whether I wake or winke,
And trewe in al that herte may bethinke.

¶ Of al my lyf, sin that day I was born,
So gentil plee in love or other thing
Ne herde never no man me biforn,
Whoso that hadde leyser and cunning
for to reherse hir chere and hir speking;
And from the morwe gan this speche laste
Til downward drow the sonne wonder faste.

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The noyse of fowles for to ben delivered
So loude rong, Have doon and let us wende!
That wel wende I the wode had al toshivered.
Come of! they cryde, alas! ye wil us shende!
Whan shal your cursed pleding have an ende?
How shulde a juge eyther party leve,
for yee or nay, withouten any preve?

¶ The goos, the cokkow, and the doke also
So cryden Kek, kek! kukkow! quek, quek! hye,
That thorgh myn eres the noyse wente tho.
The goos seyde: Al this nis not worth a flye!
But I can shape hereof a remedye,
And I wol sey my verdit faire and swythe
for water/foul, whoso be wrooth or blythe.

¶ And I for worm/foul, seyde the fool kukkow,
for I wol, of myn owne auctorite,
for comune spede, take the charge now,
for to delivere us is gret charite.
¶ Ye may abyde a while yet, parde!
Seide the turtel, if hit be your wille
A wight may speke, him were as good be stille.

I am a seed/foul, oon the unworthieste,
That wot I wel, and litel of kunninge;
But bet is that a wightes tonge reate
Than entremeten him of such doinge
Of which he neyther rede can nor singe.
And whoso doth, ful foule himself acloyeth,
for office uncommitted ofte anoyeth.

¶ Nature, which that alway had an ere
To murmur of the lewednes behinde,
With facound voys seyde: Hold your tonges there!
And I shal sone, I hope, a counseyl finde
You to deliver, and fro this noyse unbide;
I juge, of every folk men shal oon calle
To seyn the verdit for you fowles alle.

¶ Assented were to this conclusioun
The briddes alle; and fowles of ravynne
han chosen first, by pleyn eleccioun,
The tercelet of the faucon, to diffyne
Al hir sentence, and as him list, termynne;
And to Nature him gonnen to presente,
And she accepteth him with glad entente.

The tercelet seide than in this manere:
ful hard were hit to preve hit by resoun
Who loveth best this gentil formel here;
for everich hath swich replicacioun,
That noon by skillles may be broght adoun;
I can not seen that arguments avayle;
Than semeth hit ther moste be batayle.

¶ Al redy! quod these egles tercels tho.
Nay, sirs! quod he, if that I dorste it seye,
Ye doon me wrong, my tale is not ydo!
for sirs, ne taketh noght agreif, I preye,
It may noght gon, as ye wolde, in this weye;
Oure is the voys that han the charge in honde,
And to the juges dome ye moten stonde;

And therfor pees! I seye, as to my wit,
Me wolde thinke how that the worthieste
Of knighthode, and lengest hath used hit,
Moste of estat, of blode the gentileste,
Were sittingest for hir, if that hir leste;
Were of these three she wot herself, I trowe,
Which that he be, for hit is light to knowe.

¶ The water/fowles han her bedes leyd
Togeder, and of short avysement,
Whan everich had his large golee seyde,
They seyden sothly, al by oon assent,
How that The goos, with hir facounde gent,
That so desyeth to pronounce our nede,
Shal telle our tale, and preye God hir spede.

And for these water/fowles tho began
The goos to speke, and in hir cakeling
She seyde: Pees! now tak kepe every man,
And herkeneth which a reson I shal bringe;
My wit is sharp, I love no taryng;
I rede him, though he were my brother,
But she wol love him, lat him love another!

¶ Lo here! a parfit reson of a goos!
Quod the sperhawk; never mot she thee!
Lo, swich hit is to have a tonge loos!
Now parde, fool, yet were hit bet for thee
Have holde thy pees, than shewed thy nycte!
Hit lyth not in his wit nor in his wille,
But sooth is seyde, A fool can noght be stille.

¶ The laughter aroos of gentil fowles alle,
And right anon the seed/foul chosen hadde
The turtel trewe, and gunne hir to hem calle,
And preyden hir to seye the sothe sadde
Of this matere, and asked what she radde;
And she answerde, that pleynly hir entente
She wolde shewe, and sothly what she mente.

¶ Nay, God forbede a lover shulde change!
The turtel seyde, and wex for shame al reed;
Thogh that his lady evermore be straunge,
Yet let him serve hir ever, til he be deed;
for sothe, I preye noght the gooses reed;
for thogh she deyed, I wolde non other make,
I wol ben hires, til that the deth me take.

¶ Wel bourded! quod the doke, by my hat!
That men shulde alwey loven, causeles,
Who can a reson finde or wit in that?
Daunceth he mury that is mirtheles?
Who shulde recche of that is reccheles?
Ye, quek! yit quod the doke, ful wel and faire,
Ther been mo sterres, God wot, than a paire!

¶ Now fy, cherl! quod the gentil tercelet,
Out of the dunghil com that word ful right,
Thou canst noght see which thing is wel beset:
Thou farest by love as oules doon by light,
The day hem blent, ful wel they see by night;
Thy kind is of so lowe a wrechednesse,
That what love is, thou canst nat see ne gesse.

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**The
Parlement
of fowles**

¶ Tho gan the kukkow putte him forth in pees
for foul that eteth worm, and seide blyve:
So I, quod he, may have my make in pees,
I recche not how longe that ye stryve;
Lat ech of hem be soleyne al hir lyve,
This is my reed, sin they may not acorde;
This shorte lesson nedeth noght recorde.

¶ Ye! have the glotoun fild ynogh his paunche,
Than are we wel! seyde the merlioun;
Thou mordrer of the heysugge on the braunche
That broghte thee forth, thou rewtheles glotoun!
Live thou soleyne, wormes corrupcioun!
for no fors is of lakke of thy nature;
Go, lewed be thou, whyl the world may dure!

¶ Now pees, quod Nature, I comaunde here;
for I have herd al your opinioun,
And in effect yet be we never the nere;
But fynally, this is my conclusioun,
That she herself shal han the eleccioun
Of whom hir list, whoso be wrooth or blythe,
Him that she cheest, he shal hir have as swythe.

for sith hit may not here discussed be
Who loveth hir best, as seide the tercelet,
Than wol I doon hir this favour, that she
Shal have right him on whom hir herte is set,
And he hir that his herte hath on hir knet.
This juge I, Nature, for I may not lye;
To noon estat I have non other ye.

But as for counseyl for to chese a make,
If hit were reson, certes, than wolde I
Counseyle yow the royal tercel take,
As seide the tercelet ful skilfully,
As for the gentilest and most worthy,
Which I have wrought so wel to my plesaunce;
That to yow oghte been a suffisaunce.

¶ With dredful voys the formel hir answerde:
My rightful lady, goddesse of Nature,
Soth is that I am ever under your yerde,
Lyk as is everiche other creature,
And moot be youres whyl my lyf may dure;
And therfor graunteth me my firste bone,
And myn entente I wol yow sey right sone.

¶ I graunte it you, quod she; and right anon
This formel egle spak in this degree:
Almighty quene, unto this yere be doon
I aske respit for to avysen me.
And after that to have my choys al free;
This al and som, that I wolde speke and seye;
Ye gete no more, although ye do me deye.

I wol noght serven Venus ne Cupyde
for sothe as yet, by no manere weye.
¶ Now sin it may non other wyse betyde,
Quod tho Nature, here is no more to seye:
Than wolde I, that these fowles were awaye
Ech with his make, for taryng lenger here,
And seyde hem thus, as ye shul after here.

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To you speke I, ye tercelet, quod Nature,
Beth of good herte and serveth, alle three;
A yere is not so longe to endure,
And ech of yow payne him, in his degree,
for to do wel; for, God wot, quit is she
fro yow this yere; what after so befall,
This entremes is dressed for you alle.

And whan this werk al broght was to an
ende,
To every foule Nature yaf his make
By even acorde, and on hir wey they wende.
Al lord! the blisse and joye that they make!
for ech of hem gan other in winges take,
And with hir nekkes ech gan other winde,
Thanking alwey the noble goddesse of
kinde.

But first were chosen foules for to singe,
As yere by yere was alwey hir usaunce
To singe a roundel at hir departinge,
To do Nature honour and plesaunce.
The note, I trowe, maked was in fraunce;
The wordes wer swich as ye may heer finde,
The nexte vers, as I now have in minde.

Qui bien aime a tard oublie.

Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,

That hast this wintres weders over/shake,
And driven away the longe nightes blake!

Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy on/lofte;
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake,
Now welcom somer, with thy sonne
softe,
That hast this wintres weders over/shake.

Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,
Sith ech of hem recovered hath his make;
ful blisful may they singen whan they
wake;
Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders over/shake,
And driven away the longe nightes blake.

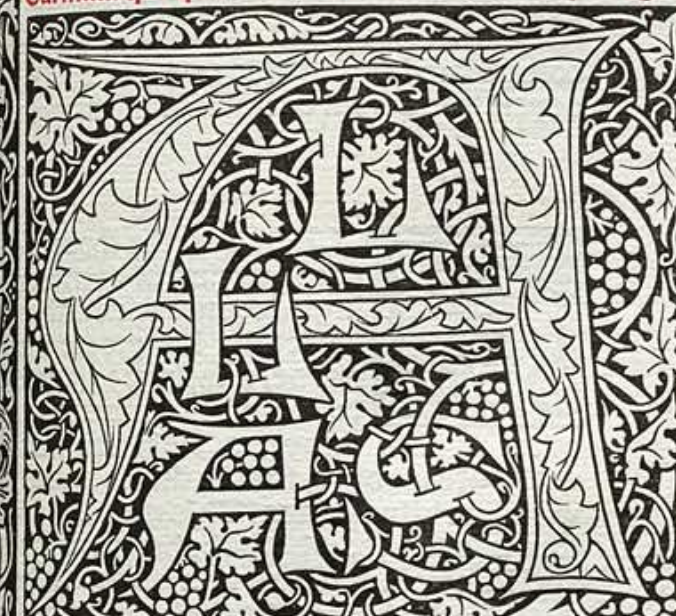
And with the showting, whan hir song
was do,
That foules maden at hir flight away,
I wook, and other bokes took me to
To rede upon, and yet I rede alway;
I hope, ywis, to rede so som day
That I shal mete som thing for to fare
The bet; and thus to rede I nil not spare.

*Explicit tractatus de congregacione Volu-
crum die sancti Valentini.*



BOETHIUS DE CONSOLATIONE PHILOSOPHIE. BOOK I.

Metre I. Carmina qui quondam studio florente peregi.



IN WEEPING, AM CONSTRAINED TO
beginnen vers of sorowful matere, that why-
lom in florisching studie made delitable dit-
tes, for lo! rendinge Muses of poetes en-
dyten to me thinges to be writen; and drery

vers of wrecchednesse weten my face with
verray teres. At the leeste, no drede ne mighte
overcomen tho Muses, that they ne weren fe-
lawes, and folweden my wey, that is to seyn,
whan I was exyled; they that weren glorie of
my youthe, whylom weleful and grene, com-
forten now the sorowful werdes of me, olde
man, for elde is comen unwarly upon me,
hasted by the harmes that I have, and sorow
hath comaunded his age to be in me. Heres
hore ben shad overtymeliche upon myn heved,
& the stake skin trembleth upon myn empted
body. Thilke deeth of men is weleful that ne
cometh not in yeres that ben swete, but com-
eth to wrecches, often yeleped.

ALLAS! alas! with how deef an
ere deeth, cruel, torneth away fro
wrecches, and naiteth to closen
wepinge eyen! Whyl fortune, un-
feithful, favorede me with lighte
goodes, the sorowful houre, that
is to seyn, the deeth, hadde almost dreynt
myn heved. But now, for fortune cloudy hath
chaunged hir deceyvable chere to meward,
myn unpitous lyf draweth along unagreable

dwellinges in me. O ye, my frendes, what
or wherto avaunte ye me to ben weleful?
for he that hath fallen stood nat in stede-
fast degree.

Prose I.

Hec dum mecum tacitus ipse reputarem.

WHILE that I stille
recordede thise
thinges with my
self, and markede
my weeply com-
pleynte with of-
fice of pointel, I
saw, stondinge a-
boven the heighte
of myn heved, a
woman of ful greet reverence by sem-
blaunt, hir eyen brenninge and cleerseinge
over the comune might of men; with a lyfly
colour, and with swich vigour & strengthe
that it ne mighte nat ben emptied; al were
it so that she was ful of so greet age, that
men ne wolde nat trowen, in no manere,
that she were of oure elde. The stature of
hir was of a doutous jugement; for som-
tyme she constrainede and shronk hirs-
ven lyk to the comune mesure of men, and
sumtyme it semede that she touchede the
hevene with the heighte of hir heved; and
whan she heef hir heved hyer, she percede
the selve hevene, so that the sighte of men
looking was in ydel. Hir clothes weren
maked of right delye thredes and subtil
crafte, of perdurable matere; the whiche
clothes she hadde woven with hir owene
hondes, as I knew wel after by hirself, de-
claringe & shewing to me the beautee; the
whiche clothes a derknesse of a forleten &
dispyssed elde hadde dusked and derked,
as it is wont to derken bismokede images.

IN the nethereste hem or bordure of
thise clothes men reddene, ywoven
in, a Grekissh **P**, that signifyeth the
lyf Actif; and aboven that lettre, in the
heyeste bordure, a Grekissh **C**, that signi-
fyeth the lyf Contemplatif. And bitwixen
these two lettres ther weren seyn degrees,
nobly ywrought in manere of laddres; by
whiche degrees men mighten climben fro
the nethereste lettre to the uppereste.
Natheles, handes of some men hadde cor-
ven that cloth by violence & by strengthe;
and everiche man of hem hadde born away
swiche peces as he mighte geten. And for-
sothe, this forseide woman bar smale
bokes in hir right hand, & in hir left hand
she bar a ceptre.

AND whan she say thise poetical
Muses aprochen aboute my bed, and
endytinge wordes to my wepinges,
she was a litel amoved, and glowede with
cruel eyen. Who, quod she, hath suffred
aprochen to this syke man thise comune
strompetes of swich a place that men cle-

pen the theatre? The whiche nat only ne
asswage nat hise sorwes with nonereme-
dies, but they wolden feden & norrisshen
hem with swete venim. forsothe, thise ben
tho that with thornes and prikkinges of
talents or affeccions, whiche that ne ben
nothings fructefyinge nor profitable, de-
stroyen the corn plenteuous of frutes of
resoun; for they holden the hertes of men
in usage, but they ne delivere nat folk fro
maladye. But if ye Muses hadden with-
drawen fro me, with your flateries, any un-
ben wont to finde comunly amonges the
poepel, I wolde wene suffre the lasse gre-
vously; for why, in swiche an unprofitable
man, myn ententes ne weren nothing en-
damaged. But ye withdrawen me this man,
that hath be norissched in the studies or
scoles of Eleaticis and of Achademicis in
Greece. But goth now rather away, ye mer-
maidenes, whiche that ben swete til it be
at the laste, and suffreth this man to be
cured and heled by myne Muses, that is to
seyn, by notable sciences.

AND thus this companye of Muses
yblamed casten wrothly the chere
downward to the erthe; and, shew-
inge by reednesse hir shame, they passed
en sorowfully the threshfold.

AND I, of whom the sighte, plounged
in teres, was derked so that I ne
mighte not knowen what that wom-
an was, of so imperial auctoritee, I wax
al abaissched and astoned, and caste my
sighte down to the erthe, and bigan stille
for to abyde what she wolde don after-
ward. Tho com she ner, and sette hir doun
upon the uttereste corner of my bed; and
she, biholdinge my chere, that was cast to
the erthe, hevy and grevous of wepinge,
compleinede, with thise wordes that I shal
seyen, the perturbacioun of my thought.

Metre II.

Heu quam precipiti mersa profundo.

ALAS! how the thought of
man, dreint in overthow-
inge deepnesse, dulseth, and
forleteth his propre cleer-
nesse, mintinge to goon in-
to foreine derknesses, as
ofte as his anoyous bisinesse wereth
without measure, that is driven to and fro
with worldly windes! This man, that why-
lom was free, to whom the hevene was open
and knowen, and was wont to goon in he-
venliche pathes, and saugh the lightnesse
of the rede sonne, & saugh the sterres of
the colde mone, & whiche sterre in hevene
useth wandering recourses, yfrit by dy-
verse speres; this man, overcomer, hadde
comprehended al this by nombre of a-
countinge in astronomye. And over this,
he was wont to seken the causes wher-



the souning windes moeven and bisien the
smothe water of the see; & what spirit torn-
eth the stable hevene; and why the sterre
aryseth out of the rede east, to fallen in the
westrene wawes; and what atempteth the
lusty houres of the firste somer sesoun,
that highteth and appaileth the erthe with
rosene flowres; and who maketh that plen-
teuous autumpne, in fulle yeres, fleteth with
hevy grapes. And eek this man was wont to
telle the diverse causes of nature that weren
yhidde. Alas! now lyeth he emptied of light
of his thought; & his nekke is pressed with
hevy cheynes; and bereth his chere enclined
adoun for the grete weighte, & is constrain-
ed to looken on the fool erthe!

Prose II.

Set medicine, inquit, tempus est.

AT tyme is now, quod
she, of medicine more
than of compleinte.
forsothe than she en-
tendinge to meward
with alle the lookinge
of hir eyen, seide: Art
nat thou he, quod she,
that whylom ynoris-
shed with my milk, &

fostered with myne metes, were escaped and
comen to corage of a parfit man? Certes, I yaf
thee swiche armures that, yif thou thyself ne
haddest first cast hem away, they shulden han
defended thee in sikernes that may nat ben
overcomen. Knowest thou me nat? Why art
thou stille? Is it for shame or for astoninge?
It were me lever that it were for shame; but
it semeth me that astoninge hath oppres-
sed thee. And whan she say me nat only
stille, but withouten office of tunge & al dumb,
she leide hir hand softly upon my brest, and
seide: Here nis no peril, quod she; he is fallen
into a litargie, whiche that is a comune syke-
nes to hertes that ben deceived. He hath a litel
foryeten himself, but certes he shal lightly
remembren himself, yif so be that he hath
knowen me or now; & that he may so don, I
wil wyppen a litel his eyen, that ben derked by
the cloude of mortal thinges. Thise wordes
seide she, and with the lappe of hir garment,
yplyted in a frounce, she dryede myn eyen,
that weren fulle of the wawes of my wepinges.

Metre III.

Tunc me discussa liquerunt nocte tenebre.

THUS, whan that night was discussed
& chased away, derknesses forleften
me, and to myn eyen repeirede ayein

hirfirste strengthe. And, right by ensaum-
ple as the sonne is hid whan the sterres ben
clustred (that is to seyn, whan sterres ben
covered with cloudes) by a swifte winde
that highte Chorus, & that the firmament
stant derked by wete ploungy cloudes, &
that the sterres nat apperen upon hevne,
so that the night semeth sprad upon
erthe: yif thanne the wind that highte Bo-
rias, ysent out of the caves of the contree
of Trace, beteth this night (that is to seyn,
chaseth it away), & discovereth the closed
day: than shyneth Phebus yshaken with
sodein light, and smyteth with his bemes
in merveling eyen.

Prose III.

Haud aliter tristitie nebulis dissolutis.

RIGHT so, & nonoth-
er wyse, the cloudes
of sorwe dissolved
and don away, I took
hevne, and receiv-
ede minde to know-
en the face of my
fysicien; so that I
sette myn eyen on
hir, & fastned my
lookinge. I beholde my norice Philoso-
phie, in whos houses I hadde conversed
& haunted fro my youthe; & I seide thus:
O thou maistresse of alle vertues, descend-
ed from the soverein sete, why artow comen
into this solitarie place of myn exil? Artow
comen for thou art makid coupable with
me of false blames?

QUOD she, my norry, sholde I
forsaken thee now, and sholde I
nat parten with thee, by comune
travaile, the charge that thou hast suffred
for envie of my name? Certes, it nere not
leveful ne sittinge thing to Philosophie,
to leten withouten compaigne the wey of
him that is innocent. Sholde I thanne re-
doute my blame, & agrysen as though ther
were bifallen a new thing? quasi diceret,
non. for trowestow that Philosophie be
now alderfirst assailed in perils by folk of
wikkede maneres? Have I nat striven with
ful greet stryf, in olde tyme, bifore the age
of my Plato, ayeines the foolhardinesse
of folye? And eek, the same Plato livinge,
his maister Socrates deservede victorie of
unrightfuldeeth in my presence. The heri-
tage of which Socrates... the heritage is to
seyn the doctrine of the whiche Socrates in
his opinioun of felicitie, that I clepe wele-
fulness... whan that the poeple of Epi-
curiens and Stoiciens and many othere en-
forceden hem to go ravishe everich man
for his part... that is to seyn, that everich
of hem wolde drawn to the defence of his
opinioun the wordes of Socrates... they,

as in partie of hir preye, todrownen me, cry-
inge and debatinge therayens, and coven-
& torenten my clothes that I hadde woven
with myn handes; & with the cloutes that
they hadden araced out of my clothes they
wenten away, weninge that I hadde gon
with hem everydel.

IN whiche Epicuriens and Stoiciens,
for as moche as ther semede some
traces or steppes of myn habite, the
Stoiciens my famuleres, perverted (sc.
persequendo) some through the error of
the wikkede or uncunninge multitude of
hem. This is to seyn that, for they semede
philosophes, they weren pursued to the
deeth & slayn. So yif thou hast nat know-
en the exilinge of Anaxogore, ne the enpy-
soninge of Socrates, ne the enpy-
soninge of Zeno, for they weren straungers: yit
mightestow han knowen the Seneciens
and the Canios and the Sorans, of whiche
folk the renoun is neither over olde ne un-
solempne. The whiche men, nothing elles
ne broughte hem to the deeth but only for
they weren enfourmed of myne maneres,
and semeden most unlyke to the studies
of wikkede folk. And forthy thou oughtest
nat to wondren though that I, in the bitter
see of this lyf, be fordriven with tempestes
blowinge aboute, in the whiche tempestes
this is my most purpos, that is to seyn,
to displeasen to wikkede men. Of whiche
shrewes, al be the ost never so greet, it is
to dyspyse; for it nis governed with no
leder of resoun, but it is ravisshed only by
fletinge error folylly and lightly. And if
they somtyme, makinge an ost ayeins us,
assaille us as stronger, our leder draweth
togidere his riches into his tour, & they
ben ententif aboute sarpulers or sachelis
unprofitable for to taken. But we that ben
heye aboven, siker fro alle tumulte & wode
noise, warnestored and enclosed in swich
a palis, whider as that chatering or anoy-
inge folye ne may nat atayne, we scorn
swiche ravineres and henteres of foulest
things.

Metre IV.

Quisquis composito serenus evo.

WHOSO it be that is cleer of
vertu, sad, & wel ordinat of
livinge, that hath put under
foot the proude werdes, and
looketh upright upon either
fortune, he may hold his chere
undiscomfited. The rage ne the manaces
of the see, commoevinge or chasing up-
ward hete fro the botme, ne shal not moove
that man; ne the unstable mountaigne
that highte Vesuvus, that wrytheth out
through his brokene chiminees smokinge

fyres. Ne the wey of thonder leit, that is
mont to smyten heye toures, ne shal nat
moove that man. Alberto thanne, o wrecch-
es, drede ye tirauntes that ben wode and
felonous withoute any strengthe? Hope
after nothing, ne drede nat; & so shaltow
desarmen the ire of thilke unmyghty ti-
raunt. But whoso that, quakinge, dredeth
or desireth thing that nis nat stable of his
right, that man that so doth hath cast away
his sheld & is removed fro his place, and
enlatheth him in the cheyne with the which
he may ben drawn.

Prose IV.

Sentient, inquit, hec.

ELESTON, quod
she, these things,
& entreth they aught
in thy corage? Artow
lyke an asse to the
harpe? Why wepe-
stow, why spilles-
tow teres? Yif thou
abydest after help
of thy leche, thee bi-
hoveth discovere thy wounde.

WHOL that hadde gadered strengthe
in my corage, answered and seide:
And nedeth it yit, quod I, of rehers-
inge or of amonicioun; and sheweth it nat
ynough by himself the sharpnesse of for-
tune, that wexeth wood ayeins me? Ne
mooveth it nat thee to seen the face or the
manere of this place (i. prison)? Is this
the liberie whiche that thou haddest chos-
en for a right certein sete to thee in myn
hous, theras thou desputedest ofte with
me of the sciences of thinges touchinge
divinitie and touchinge mankinde? Was
thanne myn habite swich as it is now? Was
than my face or my chere swiche as now
(quasi diceret, non), whan I soughte with
thee secrets of nature, whan thou enform-
edest my maneres and the resoun of alle
my lyf to the ensaumple of the ordre of
hevne? Is nat this the guerdoun that I re-
fere to thee, to whom I have be obeisaunt?
Certes, thou confermedest, by the mouth
of Plato, this sentence, that is to seyn,
that comune thinges or comunalties wer-
en blisful, yif they that hadden studied al
fully to wisdom governeden thilke thing-
es, or elles yif it so bifille that the govern-
ours of comunalties studieden to geten
wisdom.

THOU seidest eek, by the mouth of
the same Plato, that it was a neces-
sarie cause, wyse men to taken and
desire the governaunce of comune thinges,
for that the governements of citees, yleft
in the handes of felonous tormentours
citizens, ne sholden bringe in pestilence

& destruccioun to gode folk. And therfor
I, folwinge thilke auctoritee (sc. Platonis),
desired to putten forth in execucioun and
in acte of comune administracioun thilke
thinges that I hadde lerned of thee among
my secree resting/whyles. Thou, and God
that putte thee in the thoughtes of wyse
folk, ben knowinge with me, that nothing
ne broughte me to maistrie or dignitee, but
the comune studie of alle goodnesse. And
therof comth it that bitwixen wikked folk
and me han ben grevous discordes, that ne
mighten ben releved by preyers; for this
libertee hath the freedom of consciencie,
that the wratthe of more mighty folk hath
alwey ben despyed of me for savacioun of
right.

WHOL ofte have I resisted and with-
stonde thilke man that highte
Conigaste, that made alwey as-
sautes ayeins the prospre fortunes of pore
feble folk? How ofte eek have I put of forcast
out him, Trigwille, provost of the kinges
hous, bothe of the wronges that he hadde
bigunne to don, and eek fully performed?
How ofte have I covered & defended by the
auctoritee of me, put ayeins perils... that
is to seyn, put myn auctoritee in peril for...
the wretched pore folk, that the covetyse
of straungers unpunished tourmented-
en alwey with misyses & grevaunces out
of noumbre? Never man ne drowme yit fro
right to wronge. Whan I say the fortunes
and the riches of the poeple of the pro-
vinces ben harmed or amenused, outhur by
priveeravynes or by comune tributes or ca-
riages, as sory was I as they that suffred-
en the harm.

Glossa. Whan that Theodoric, the king of
Gothes, in a dere yere, hadde his gerner-
es ful of corn, and comaunded that no man
ne sholde byen no corn til his corn were
sold, & that at a grevous dere prys, Boece
withstood that ordinaunce, and overcom
it, knowinge al this the king himself.

Textus.

WHAN it was in the soure hungry
tyme, ther was establisshed or
cryed grevous and inplitable co-
empcioun, that men sayen wel it sholde
greetly turmenten & endamagen al the pro-
vince of Campaigne, I took stryf ayeins
the provost of the pretorie for comune pro-
fit. And, the king knowinge of it, I overcom
it, so that the coempcioun ne was not axed
ne took effect.

Glossa. Coempcioun, that is to seyn, com-
une achat or bying togidere, that were es-
tablisshed upon the poeple by swiche a
manere imposicioun, as whoso boughte
a bussel corn, he moste yeve the king the
fifte part.

NALIN, a counsellor of Rome, the riches of the which Paulin the houndes of the palays, that is to seyn, the officeres, wolden han devoured by hope and covetise, yit drow I him out of the jowes (sc. faucibus) of hem that gapeden. And for as moche as the peyne of the accusacioun ajuged biforn ne sholde nat sodeinly henten ne punisshen wrongfully Albin, a counsellor of Rome, I putte me ayeins the hates and indignaciouns of the accuser Ciprian. Is it nat thanne ynough yseyn, that I have purchased grete discordes ayeins myself? But I oughte bethe more assured ayeins alle othere folk (s. Romayns), that for the love of rightwisesse I ne reserved never nothing to myself to hemward of the kinges halle, sc. officers, by the which I were the more siker. But thorough tho same accusours accusinge, I am condempned. Of the nombir of the which accusours oon Basilus, that whylom was chased out of the kinges service, is now compelled in accusinge of my name, for nede of foreine moneye. Also Opilion and Gaudencius han accused me, al be it so that the justice regal hadde whylom demed hem bothe to go into exil for hir trecheries and fraudes withoute nombir. To which jugement they nolden nat obeye, but defendeden hem by the sikernes of holy houses, that is to seyn, fleden into seintuaries; and whan this was aperceived to the king, he comaunded, that but they voidede the citee of Ravenne by certain day assigned, that men sholde merken hem on the forwey with an hoot yren & chasen hem out of the toune. Now what thing, semeth thee, mighte ben lykned to this crueltee? for certes, thilke same day was received the accusinge of my name by thilke same accusours. What may ben seid herto? (quasi diceret, nichil). Hath my studie and my cunninge deserved thus; or elles the forseide dampnacioun of me, made that hem rightful accusours or no? (quasi diceret, non). Was not fortune ashamed of this? Certes, al hadde nat fortune ben ashamed that innocence was accused, yit oughte she han had shame of the filthe of myne accusours.

AT, axestow in somme, of what gilt I am accused? men seyn that I wolde save the companye of the senatours. And desiredst thou to heren in what manere? I am accused that I sholde han destourbed the accuser to beren lettres, by which he sholde han makid the senatours giltie ayeins the kinges real majestee. O maistresse, what demestow of this? Shal I forsake this blame, that I ne be no shame to thee? (quasi diceret, non). Certes,

I have wold it, that is to seyn, the savacioun of the senat, ne I shal never leten wilne it, and that I confesse & am aknowe; stourbed shal cese. for shal I clepe it thanne a felonie or a sinne that I have desired the savacioun of the ordre of the senat? (quasi diceret, dubito quid). And certes yit hadde thilke same senat don by me, thorough hir decrets & hir jugements, as though it were a sinne or a felonie; that is to seyn, to wilne the savacioun of hem (sc. senatus). But folye, that lyethalwey to himself, may not chaunge the merite of thinges. Ne I trowe nat, by the jugement of Socrates, that it were lefevel to me to hyde the sothe, ne assente to lesinges. But certes, how so ever it be of this, I putte to gessen or preisen to the jugement of the & of wyse folk. Of which thing al the ordinaunce & the sothe, for as moche as folle that ben to comen after our dayes shullen knowen it, I have put it in scripture and in remembrance. for touching the lettres falsly makid, by which lettres I am accused to han hoped the fredom of Rome, what aperteneth me to speke therof? Of which lettres the fraude hadde ben shewed apertly, yif I hadde had libertee for to han used & ben at the confessioun of myne accusours, the which thing in alle nedes hath greet strengthe. for what other fredom may men hope? Certes, I wolde that som other fredom mighte ben hoped. I wolde thanne han answered by the wordes of a man that highte Canius; for whan he was accused by Caius Cesar, Germeynes sone, that he (Canius) was knowinge and consentinge of a conjuracioun ymakid ayeins him (sc. Caius), this Canius answered thus: Yif I hadde wist it, thou haddest nat wist it. In which thing some hath nat so dulled my wit, that I pleyne only that shrewede folk aparailen felonies ayeins vertu; but I wondre greetly how that they may performe thinges that they hadde hoped for to don. for why, to wilne shrewednesse, that comth peraventure of oure defeaute; but it is lyk a monstre and amervaille, how that, in the present sighte of God, may ben achieved and performed swiche thinges as every felonous man hath conceived in his thought ayeins innocents. for which thing oon of thy famileres nat unskilfully axed thus: Yif God is, whennes comen wilkide thinges? And yif God ne is, whennes comen gode thinges? But al hadde it ben lefevel that felonous folk, that now desiren the blood & the deeth of alle gode men and eek of alle the senat, han wilned to gon destroyen me, whom they han seyn alwey batailen & defenden gode men and eek al the senat, yit had I nat des-

served of the faderes, that is to seyn, of the senatours, that they sholden wilne my destruccioun.

HOU remembrest wel, as I gesse, that whan I wolde doon or seyn anything, thou thyself, alwey present, rewiledest me. At the city of Verone, whan that the king, gredy of comune slaughter, caste him to transporten up al the ordre of the senat the gilt of his real majestee, of the which gilt that Albin was accused, with how gret sikernes of peril to me defendede I al the senat! Thou wost wel that I seye sooth, ne I ne avauntede me never in preysing of myself. for alwey, whan any wight receiveth precious renoun in avauntinge himself of his werkes, he amenseth the secree of his conscience. But now thou mayst wel seen to what ende I am comen for myne innocence; I receive peyne of fals felonye for guerdon of verray vertu. And what open confessioun of felonye hadde ever juges so acordaunt in crueltee, that is to seyn, as myn accusinge hath, that either errour of mannes wit or elles condicioun of fortune, that is uncertein to alle mortal folk, ne submittede some of hem, that is to seyn, that it ne enclynede som juge to han pitee or compassioun? for althogh I hadde ben accused that I wolde brenne holy houses, and strangle preestes with wilkide swerde, or that I hadde greythed deeth to al gode men, al gages the sentence sholde han punisshed me, present, confessed, or convict. But now I am renewed fro the citee of Rome almost fyve hundred thousand pas, I am withoute defence dampned to proscriptioun and to the deeth, for the studie and bountees that I have doon to the senat. But O, wel ben they worthy of merite (as who seith, nay), ther mighte never yit non of hem be convict of swiche blame as myne is! Of which trespas, myne accusours sayen ful wel the dignitee; the which dignitee, for they wolden derken it with medeling of som felonye, they baren me on hand, and lyeden, that I hadde polut and defouled my conscience with sacrilege, for covetise of dignitee. And certes, thou thyself, that are plaunted in me, chacedest out of the sege of my corage al covetise of mortal thinges; ne sacrilege hadde no leve to han a place in me biforn thyne eyen. for thou droppedest every day in myne eres and in my thought thilke comaundement of Dictagoras, that is to seyn, men shal serve to Godde, & not to goddes. Ne it was nat convenient, ne no nede, to taken help of the foulest spirites; I, that thou hast ordeined & set in swiche excellence that thou makedest me lyk to God. And over this, the right clene secree chaumbre of myne

hous, that is to seyn, my wyf, & the companye of myn honest freendes, and my wyves fader, as wel holy as worthy to ben revered thorough his owne dedes, defenden me from alle suspicioun of swich blame. But O malice! for they that accusen me taken of thee, Philosophie, feith of so gret blame! for they trowen that I have had affinitee to malefice or enchauntement, by cause that I am replenished and fulfilled with thy techinges, and enformed of thy maneres. And thus it suffiseth not only, that thy reverence ne availe me not, but yif that thou, of thy free wille, rather be blemished with myn offencioun. But certes, to the harmes that I have, ther bitydeth yit this encrees of harm, that the gessinge & the jugement of moche folk ne looken nothing to the desertes of thinges, but only to the aventure of fortune; and jugen that only swiche thinges ben purveyed of God, which that temporel welefulnesse commendeth.

Glose. As thus: that, yif a wight have prosperitee, he is a good man and worthy to han that prosperitee; and whoso hath adversitee, he is a wilkide man, and God hath forsake him, and he is worthy to han that adversitee. This is the opinioun of some folk.

AND therof comth that good gessinge, first of alle thing, forsaketh wrecches: certes, it greveth me to thinke right now the dyverse sentences that the poeple seith of me. And thus moche I seye, that the last charge of contrarious fortune is this: that, whan that any blame is leyed upon a catif, men wenen that he hath deserved that he suffreth. And I, that am put away fro gode men, and despoiled of dignitees, & defouled of my name by gessinge, have suffred torment for my gode dedes. Certes, me semeth that I see the felonous covines of wilkide men habounden in joye and in gladnesse. And I see that every lorel shapeth him to finde out newe fraudes for to accuse gode folk. And I see that gode men beth overthrowen for drede of my peril; & every luxurious tourmentour dar doon alle felonye unpunished & ben excited therto by yiftes; and innocents ne ben not only despoiled of sikernes but of defence; and therefore me list to cryen to God in this wyse:

Metre V.

O stelliferi conditor orbis.

THOU maker of the whele that bereth the sterres, which that art yfastned to thy perdurable chayer, and tormeist the hevene with a ravishing swigh, and constraineist the

sterres to suffer thy lawe; so that the mone
sometymes hyning with hir ful hornes, met-
ing with alle the bemes of the sonne hir
brother, hydeth the sterres that ben lesse;
and somtyme, whan the mone, pale with
hir derke hornes, approacheth the sonne,
leseth hir lightes; and that the eve/sterre
Hesperus, whiche that in the firste tyme of
the night bringeth forth hir colde arys-
inges, cometh eft ayein hir used cours, &
is pale by the morwe at the rysing of the
sonne, and is thanne cleped Lucifer. Thou
restreinst the day by shorter dwelling, in
the tyme of colde winter that maketh the
leves to falle. Thou dividest the swifte
tydes of the night, whan the hote somer is
comen. Thy might attempreth the variaunts
sesons of the yere; so that Zephirus the
debonair wind bringeth ayein, in the first
somer sesoun, the leves that the wind that
highte Boreas hath refte ayein in autumpne,
that is to seyn, in the laste ende of somer;
and the sedes that the sterre that highte
Arcturus saw, ben waxen heye cornes whan
the sterre Sirius eschaufteth hem. Ther nis
nothing unbounde from his olde lawe, ne
forleteth the werke of his propre estat.

THOU governour, governinge alle
things by certein ende, why refu-
sestow only to governe the werkes
of men by dewe manere? Why suffrest thou
that slydinge fortune to tene so grete en-
trechaunginges of thinges, so that any-
ous peyne, that sholde dewely punissh
felouns, punissheth innocents? And folk
of wikked maneres sitten in heye chayres,
and anyinge folk treden, & that unright-
fully, on the nekkes of holy men? And ver-
tu clershyninge naturelly is hid in derke
derkenesses, and the rightful man bereth
the blame and the peyne of the feloun. Ne
forsweringe ne the fraude, covered and
kembd with a fals colour, ne anyeth nat to
shrewes; the whiche shrewes, whan hem
list to usen hir strengthe, they rejoycen
hem to putten under hem the sovereyne
kinges, whiche that poeple withouten
noubre dreden.

THOU, what so ever thou be that
knittest alle bondes of thinges,
loke on thise wrecchede erthes; we
men that ben nat a foule party, but a fayr
party of so grete a werk, we ben tormented
in this see of fortune. Thou governour,
withdraw and restreyn the ravissching
flodes, and fastne and ferme thise erthes
stable with thilke bonde, with whiche thou
governest the hevene that is so large.

Prose V.

Hic ubi continuato dolore delatrat.

WHAN hadde, with
a continuall sorwe,
sobbed or borken
out thise thinges,
she with hir chere
pesible, and noth-
ing amoeved with
my compleintes,
seide thus: Whan

she, sorwefull and wepinge, I wiste anon
that thou were a wrecche and exiled; but I
tale ne hadde shewed it to me. But certes,
put out of it; but thou hast failed of thy
weye and gon amis. And yif thou hast lever
for to wene that thou be put out of thy
contree, than hast thou put out of thy
rather than any other wight hath. For no
wight but thyself ne mighte never han don
that to thee. For yif thou remembre of what
contree thou art born, it nis nat governed
by emperours, ne by governement of mul-
titude, as weren the contrees of hem of
Athenes; but oo lord and ooking, and that
is God, that is lord of thy contree, whiche
that rejoyseth him of the dwelling of his
citezenes, and nat for to putte hem in exil;
of the whiche lord it is a soverayne freedom
to be governed by the brydel of him and o-
bey to his justice. Hastow foryetten thilke
right olde lawe of thy citee, in the whiche
citee it is ordeined and establisshed, that
for what wight that hath lever founden
therin his sete or his hous than elleswer,
he may nat be exiled by no right from that
place; for whoso that is contened inwith
the palis and the clos of thilke citee, ther
nis no drede that he may deserve to ben
exiled. But whoso that leteth the wil for to
enhabite there, he forleteth also to deserve
to ben citezein of thilke citee. So that I sey,
that the face of this placenemoveth menat
so mochel as thyne owne face. Ne I axe nat
rather the walles of thy librarie, aparayled
and wrought with yvory & with glas, than
after the sete of thy thought. In whiche I
putte nat whylom bokes, but I putte that
that maketh bokes worthy of prys or pre-
cious, that is to seyn, the sentence of my
bokes. And certeinly of thy desert, bi-
stowed in comune good, thou hast seid
sooth, but after the multitude of thy gode
dedes, thou hast seid fewe; & of the honeste
tee or of the falsnesse of thinges that ben
aposed ayeins thee, thou hast remembered
thinges that ben knowen to alle folk. And
of the felonies and fraudes of thyne ac-
cusours, it semeth thee have ytouched it
forsothe rightfully & shortly, al mighten

the same thinges betere and more plenti-
ously ben couth in the mouthe of the
poeple that knoweth al this.

THOU hast eek blamed gretly and com-
pleined of the wrongful dede of the
senat. And thou hast sorwed for my
blame, & thou hast wopen for the damage
of thy renoun that is apayed; and thy laste
sorwe eschauftede ayeins fortune, & com-
pleinest that guerdouns ne ben nat even-
liche yolden to the desertes of folk. And
in the latere ende of thy wode Muse, thou
preydest that thilke pees that governeth
the hevene sholde governe the erthe. But
for that many tribulaciouns of affecciouns
han assailed thee, and sorwe and ire & wep-
inge todrawn thee diversely; as thou art
now feble of thought, mightier remedies
ne shullen nat yit touchen thee, for whiche
we wol usen somdel lighter medicines: so
that thilke passions that ben woxen harde
in swellinge, by perturbaciouns flowing
into thy thought, mowen wexen esy and
softe, to receiven the strengthe of a more
mighty and more egre medicine, by an esier
touchinge.

Metre VI.

*Cum Phebi radiis grave
Cancri sidus inestuat.*

WHAN that the hevy sterre of
the Cancre eschaufteth by the
bemes of Phebus, that is to
seyn, whan that Phebus the
sonne is in the signe of the
Cancre, whoso yeveth thanne
largely hise sedes to the feldes that refu-
sen to receiven hem, lat him gon, bigyled
of trust that he hadde to his corn, to acorns
of okes. Yif thou wolt gadre violettes, ne
go thou not to the purpur wode whan the
feld, chirkinge, agryseth of colde by the
felnesse of the winde that highte Aquilon.
Yif thou desirest or wolt usen grapes, ne
seke thou nat, with a glotonous hond, to
streyn and presse the stalkes of the vine
in the first somer sesoun; for Bachus, the
god of wyne, hath rather yeven his yiftes
to autumpne, the later ende of somer.

GOD tokneth & assigneth the tymes,
ablinge hem to hir propres offices;
ne he ne suffreth nat the stoundes
whiche that himself hath devyded and con-
streyned to ben ymedled togidere. And
forthy he that forleteth certein ordinance
of doinge by overthrowinge wey, he ne hath
no glade issue or ende of his werkes.

Prose VI.

*Primum igitur paterisne me pauculis ro-
gacionibus.*

FIRST woltow suf-
fre me to touche &
assaye the estat of
thy thought by a
fewe demaundes,
so that I may under-
stonde what be the
manere of thy cura-
cioun? Axe me,
quod I, at thy wille,
what thou wolt, and I shal answer.

HO seide she thus: Whether wene-
stow, quod she, that this world be
governed by foolish happes and
fortunous, or elles that ther be in it any
governement of reson?

CERTES, quod I, I ne trowe nat in
no manere, that so certein thinges
sholde bemoeved by fortunous for-
tune; but I wot wel that God, maker and
mayster, is governour of his werk. Ne never
nas yit day that mighte putte me out of the
sothnesse of that sentence.

SO is it, quod she; for the same thing
songe thou a litel herbifore, and bi-
weyledest and biweptest, that only
men weren put out of the cure of God. For
of alle other thinges thou ne doutest
nat that they nere governed by reson. But
owh! (i. pape!) I wondre gretly, certes, why
that thou art sylk, sin that thou art put in so
holsom a sentence. But lat us seken de-
per; I conjecte that ther laketh I not nere
what. But sey me this: sin that thou ne
doutest nat that this world be governed
by God, with whiche governailes takestow
hede that it is governed?

ANNECE, quod I, knowe I the sen-
tence of thy questioun; so that I
ne may nat yit answeren to thy de-
maundes.

INAS nat deceived, quod she, that
ther ne failleth somwhat, by whiche
the maladye of thy perturbacioun is
crept into thy thought, so as the strengthe
of the palis chynning is open. But sey me
this: remembreth thou what is the ende of
thinges, and whider that the entencioun of
alle kinde tendeth?

I HAVE herd it told somtyme, quod
I; but drerinesse hath dulled my
memorie.

CERTES, quod she, thou wost wel
whennes that alle thinges ben com-
en and procedeth?

I wot well, quod I, and answered, that
God is beginning of al.

AND how may this be, quod she, that,
sin thou knowest the beginning of
thinges, that thou ne knowest nat
what is the ende of thinges? But swiche

ben the customes of perturbaciouns, and this power they han, that they may move a man out of his place, that is to seyn, fro the stablenes & perfeccioun of his knowynge; but, certes, they may nat alarace him, ne aliene him in al. But I wolde that thou woldest answer to this: remembrethow that thou art a man?

Why sholde I nat remembre that? quod I. Maystow nat telle me thanne, quod she, what thing is a man?

WISTESTOW me nat, quod I, whether that I be a resonable mortal beest? I woot wel, & I confesse wel that I am it. Wistestow never yit that thou were any other thing? quod she.

No, quod I.

Woot I, quod she, other cause of thy maladye, and that right grete. Thou hast left for to knowen thyself, what thou art; thorough whiche I have pleyntly founden the cause of thy maladye, or elles the entree of recoveringe of thyne he. for why, for thou art confounded with foryeting of thyself, forthy sorwes tow that thou art exiled of thy propre goodes. And for thou ne wost what is the ende of thynges, forthy demestow that felonous and wikked men ben mighty and weleful. And for thou hast foryeten by whiche governements the world is governed, forthy wenestow that these mutaciouns of fortune fleten withoute governour. These ben grete causes not only to maladye, but, certes, grete causes to deeth. But I thanke the auctor and the maker of he, that nature hath not al forleten thee. I have grete norisschinges of thyne he, and that is, the sothe sentence of governaunce of the worlde; that thou bilevest that the governinge of it nis nat subject ne underput to the folie of these happes aventurous, but to the resoun of God. And therfor doute

DE CONSOLATIONE PHILOSOPHIE. BOOK II. PROSE I.

Postea paulisper conticuit.

AFTER THIS SHE STUNTE A LITTEL; AND, AFTER that she hadde gadered by atempre stillenesse myn attentacioun, she seide thus: (As who mighte seyn thus: After these thynges she stinte a litel; and whan she aperceived by atempre stillenesse that I was ententif to herkene hir, she bigan to speke in this wyse): Yif I, quod she, have understanden and knowen outrely the causes and the habit of thy maladye, thou languishest

thee nothing; for of this litel spark thyne hete of lyf shal shyne.

AT for as moche as it is nat time yit of faster remedies, and the nature of thoughtes deceived is this, that as ofte as they casten away sothe opiniouns, they clothen hem in false opiniouns, which false opiniouns the derkenesse of perturbacioun wexeth up, that confoundeth the verray insighte: & that derkenesse shal I assaye somewhat to maken thynne & wayk by lighte and meneliche remedies; so that, after that the derkenesse of deceyvinge desiringes is don away, thou mowe knowe the shyninge of verray light.

Metre VII.

Nubibus atris.

THE sterres, covered with blaie cloudes, ne mowen yeten adoun no light. Yif the trouble wind that bight Huster, turning & walwinge the see, medleth the hete, that is to seyn, the boyling up from the botme; the waves, that whylom weren clere as glas & lyke to the faire clere dayes, withstande anon the sightes of men by the filthe and ordure that is resolved. And the fletinge stream, that royleth down dyversly fro heyemountaignes, is arested and resisted ofte tyme by the encounteringe of a stoon that is departed and fallen from som roche.

AND forthy, yif thou wolt loken and demen sooth with cleer light, and holden the wey with a right path, weyvethou joye, dryf fro thee drede, flemethou hope, ne lat no sorwe aproche; that is to seyn, lat non of these four passious overcomen thee or blende thee. For cloudy and derke is thilke thought, and bounde with bryddles, wheras these thynges regnen.

Explicit Liber Primus.

and art defeted for desyr and talent of thy rather fortune. She, that ilke fortune only, that is chaunged, as thou feyrest, to theward, hath perverted the cleernesse and the estat of thy corage. I understonde the felefolde colours and deceites of thilke merveilous monstre fortune, & how she useth ful flateringe familiaritee with hem that she enforceth to bigyle; so longe, til that she confounde with unsufferable sorwe hem that she hath left in despayr unpurveyed. And yif thou remembreth wel the kinde, the maneres, and the desert of thilke fortune, thou shalt wel knowe that, as in hir, thou neverne haddest ne hast ylost any fair thing. But, as I trowe, I shal nat gretly travaillen to do the remem-

ber on these thynges. for thou were wont to hurtelen and despyse hir, with manly wordes, whan she was blaundissinge and present, & purswedest hir with sentences that were drawn out of myn entree, that is to seyn, out of myn informacioun. But no sodein mutacioun ne bitydeth nat withoute a manere chaunginge of corages; and so is it befallen that thou art a litel departed fro the pees of thy thought.

AT now is tyme that thou drinke and ataste some softe and delitable thynges; so that, whan they ben entred within thee, it mowe maken wey to strengere drinckes of medicynes. Com now forth therfore thesuasioun of swetenesse rethorien, whiche that goth only the right wey, whyl she forsaketh nat myne estatuts. And with Rhetorice com forth Musice, a damisel of our hous, that singeth now lighter moedes or prolaciouns, now hevyer. What eyleth thee, man? What is it that hath cast thee into morninge and into wepinge? I trowe that thou hast seyn som new thing and uncouth. Thou wenest that fortune be chaunged ayein thee; but thou wenest wrong, yif thou that wene. Alwey thou ben hir maneres; she hath rather kept, as to theeward, hir propre stablenesse in the chaunginge of hirself. Right swich was she whan she flattered thee, & deceived thee with unweleful lykings of fals welefulnesse. Thou hast now knowen and ataynt the doutous or double visage of thilke blinde goddesse fortune. She, that yit covereth hir and wimpleth hir to other folk, hath shewed hir everydel to thee. Yif thou aprovest hir and thenkest that she is good, use hir maneres and pleyne thee nat. And yif thou agrysest hir false trecherye, despyse and cast away hir that pleyeth so harmfully; for she, that is now cause of so muche sorwe to thee, sholde ben cause to thee of pees & of joye. She hath forsaken thee, forsothe; the whiche that never man may bensiker that shene shal forsake him.

OLDDESTOW than thilke welefulnesse precious to thee that shal passen? And is present fortune dereworth to thee, which that nis nat feithful for to dwelle; and, whan she goth away, that she bringeth a wight in sorwe? for sinshemaynat ben withholden at amannes wille, she maketh him a wrecche whan she departeth fro him. What other thing is flittinge fortune but a maner shewing of wrecchednesse that is to comen? Ne it ne suffyseth not only to loken on thinge that is present bifrom the eyen of a man. But

wisdom loketh and amasureth the ende of thynges; & the same chaunginge from oon into another, that is to seyn, from adversitee into prosperitee, maketh that the manaces of fortune ne ben not for to dreden, ne the flateringes of hir to ben desired. Thus, at the laste, it bihoveth thee to suffer with evene wille in pacience al that is don inwith the floor of fortune, that is to seyn, in this world, sin thou hast ones put thynekke under the yok of hir. for yif thou wolt wryten a lawe of wendinge & of dwellinge to fortune, whiche that thou hast chosen frely to ben thy lady, artow nat wrongful in that, & makest fortune wroth and aspere by thyne impacience, & yit thou mayst nat chaunge hir?

If thou committest and bitakest thy sailes to the winde, thou shalt be shoven, not thider that thou woldest, but whider that the wind shoveth thee. Yif thou castest thy sedes into the felde, thou sholdest han in minde that the yeres ben, amonges, otherwhyle plenteuous and otherwhyle bareyne. Thou hast bitaken thyself to the governaunce of fortune, and forthy it bihoveth thee to ben obeisant to the maneres of thy lady. Enforcest thou thee to aresten or withholden the swiftnesse & the swigh of hir turninge whele? O thou fool of alle mortal foolles, if fortune bigan to dwelle stable, she cesede thanne to ben fortune!

Metre I.

Hec cum superba verterit vices dextra.

HAN fortune with a proud right hand hath torned hir chaunginge stoundes, she fareth lyk the maneres of the boylinge Eurype. Glosa. Eurype is an arm of the see that ebbeth and floweth; and somtyme the streem is on o syde, and somtyme on the other. Text. She, cruel fortune, casteth adoun kinges that whylom weren ydrad; & she, deceivable, enhaunseth up the humble chere of him that is discomfited. Ne she neither hereth ne rekketh of wrecchede wepinges; & she is so hard that she laugheth and scorneth the wepinges of hem, the whiche she hath maketh wepe with hir free wille. Thus she pleyeth, & thus she proeveth hir strengthes; and sheweth a greet wonder to alle hir servauntes, yif that a wight is seyn weleful, and overthrowe in an houre.

Boethius de Consolatione Philosophie. Book II.

WHATERTES, I wolde pleten with thee a fewe thinges, usinge the wordes of fortune; tak hede now thyself, yif that she axeth right: O thou man, wherfore makest thou me gilty by thyne everydayes pleyninges? What wrong have I don thee? What goodes have I bireft thee that weren thyne? Stryf or plete with me, bfore what juge that thou wolt, of the possession of riches or of dignitees. And yif thou mayst shewen me that ever any mortal man hath received any of tho thinges to ben hise in propre, than wol I graunte frely that alle thilke thinges weren thyne whiche that thou axest. When that nature broughte thee forth out of thy moder wombe, I receyved thee naked and nedy of alle thinges, and I norisshede thee with my riches, and was redy and ententif through my favour to susteyne thee; and that maketh thee now impacient ayeins me; and I envyrounde thee with alle the abundance and shyninge of alle goodes that ben in my right. Now it lyketh me to withdrawn my hand; thou hast had grace as he that hath used of foreine goodes: thou hast no right to pleyne thee, as though thou haddest outrely forlorn alle thy thinges. Why pleyneest thou thanne? I have done thee no wrong. Richesses, honours, and swiche other thinges ben of my right. My servauntes knowen me for hir lady; they comen with me, & departen when I wende. I dar wel affermen hardily, that yif tho thinges of which thou pleyneest that thou hast forlorn, hadde ben thyne, thoune haddeest not lorn hem. Shal I thanne only ben defended to usen my right?

WHATERTES, it is leveful to the hevne to make clere dayes, & after that, to coveren tho same dayes with derke nightes. The yeer hath eek leve to apparailen the visage of the erthe, now with floures and now with fruit, & to confounden hem somtyme with reynes and with coldes. The see hath eek his right to ben somtyme calme & blaudishing with smothe water, and somtyme to ben horrible with wawes and with tempestes. But the covetise of men, that may nat ben stanchid, shal it binde me to ben stedefast, sin that stedefastnesse is uncouth to my maneres? Swich is my strengthe, & this pley I pleye continually. I torne the whirlinge wheel with the turninge cercle; I am glad to chaungen the lowest to the heyest, and the

heyest to the lowest. Worth up, if thou wolt, so it be by this lawe, that thou ne holdenat that I do thee wronge though thou descende adoun, when the resoun of my pley axeth it.

WHATERTES thou nat how Cresus, the king of Lydiens, of whiche litel biforn, that this rewliche Cresus was caught of Cyrus and lad to the fyr to ben brent, but that a rayn descended down fro of thy minde how that Paulus, consul of Rome, when he hadde taken the king of Perciens, weep pitously for the captivitee of the self kinge? What other thing biwailen the crynges of tragedies but only the dedes of fortune, that with an unwar stroke overtorneth realmes of grete nobley? *Glose.* Tragedie is to seyn, a citee of a prosperitee for a tyme, that endeth in wretchednesse.

WHATERTES nat thou in Greke, when thou were yonge, that in the entree, or in the celere, of Jupiter, ther ben couched two tonnes; that on is ful of good, that other is ful of harm? What right hast thou to pleyne, yif thou hast taken more plenteuously of the good syde, that is to seyn, of my riches and prosperites; and what eek if I ne be nat al departed fro thee? What eek yif my mutabilitee yiveth thee rightful cause of hope to han yit beter thinges? Natheles dismaye thee nat in thy thought; and thou that art put in the comune realme of alle, ne desyre nat to liven by thyne only propre right.

Metre II.

Sí quantas rapidis flatibus incitus.

WHATERTES, thou nat how, desse of riches, hieldedown with ful horn, and with draweth nat hir hand, as many riches as the see torneth upward sandes when it is moeved with ravissinge blastes, or elles as many riches as ther shynen brighte sterres on hevne on the sterry nightes; yit, for al that, mankind nolde not cese to wepe wretchedde pleyntes. And al be it so that God receyveth gladly hir preyres, and yiveth them (as fool/large) moche gold, & aparailleth covetous men with noble or clere honours: yit semeth hem haven ygeten nothing, but alwey hir cruel ravynne, devouringe al that they han geten, sheweth other gapinges; that is to seyn, gapen and desyren yit after mo riches. What byddes mighten withholden, to any certein ende, the desordene covetise of men, when ever the rather that it fleteth in large yiftes, the more ay brenneth in hem the thirst of

havinge? Certes he that, quakinge & dredful, weneth himselven nedy, he ne liveth nevermore riche.

Prose III.

His igitur si pro se tecum fortuna loqueretur.

WHATERTES, yif that fortune spake with thee for herself in this manere, forsothe thou ne haddest nat what thou mightest answer. And, if thou hast anything wherwith thou mayest rightfully defenden thy compleint, it behoveth thee to shewen it; & I wol yeven thee space to tellen it.

WHATERTES, quod I thanne, thise beeth faire thinges, & enointed with hony swetenesse of rethorike and ben delicious. But to wrecches is a deeper felinge of harm; this is to seyn, that wrecches felen the harmes that they suffer more greuously than the remedies or the delites of thise wordes mowen gladen or comforten hem; so that, when thise thinges stinten for to sounen in eres, the sorwe that is inset greveth the thought.

WHATERTES so is it, quod she, for thise ne ben yit none remedies of thy maladye; but they ben a maner norisshinges of thy sorwe, yit rebel ayein thy curacioun. For when that tyme is, I shal moeve swiche thinges that percen hemself depe. But natheles, that thou shalt not wilne to leten thyself a wrecche, hast thou foryeten the number and the manere of thy welefulnesse? I holde me stille, how that the soverayne men of the citee token thee in cure and kepinge, when thou were orphan of fader and moder, and were chosen in afinittee of princes of the citee; and thou begunne rather to be leef and dere than for to ben a neighbour; the whiche thing is the most precious kinde of any propinquitee or alpaunce that may ben. Who is it that ne seidetho that thou wereright weleful, with so grete a nobleye of thy fadres in lawe, and with the chastitee of thy wyf, and with the oportunittee and noblesse of thy masculin children, that is to seyn, thy sonnes? And over al this, me list to passen the comune thinges, how thou haddeest in thy youth dignitees that weren werned to olde men. But it delyteth me to comen now to the singular uphepinge of thy welefulnesse. Yif any fruit of mortal thinges may han any weichte or prys of welefulnesse, mightest thou ever foryeten, for any charge

of harm that mighte bifalle, the remembrance of thilke day that thou saye thy two sonnes maked conseileres, and ylad to gedere fro thyne house under so greet assemblee of senatoures & under the blythenesse of poeple; and when thou saye hem set in the court in here chayeres of dignitees? Thou, rethorien or pronouncere of kinges preysinges, deservedest glorie of wit and of eloquence, when thou, sittinge bitwene thy two sonnes, conseileres, in the place that highte Circo, fulfuldest the abydinge of the multitude of poeple that was sprad abouten thee, with so large preysinge & laude, as men singen in victories. Tho yave thou wordes to fortune, as I trowe, that is to seyn, tho felledest thou fortune with glosinge wordes & deceivedest hir, when she acoyede thee and norisshede thee as hir owne delyces. Thou bere away of fortune a yifte, that is to seyn, swiche guerdoun, that she never yaf to priver man. Wilt thou therfor leye a rekeninge with fortune? She hath now twinkled first upon thee with a wikkede eye. Yif thou considere the noubre and the manere of thy blisses and of thy sorwes, thou mayst nat forsaken that thou art yit blisful. For if thou therfor wenest thyself nat weleful, for thinges that tho semeden joyful ben passed, ther nis nat why thou sholdest wene thyself a wrecche; for thinges that semen now sorwe passen also.

WHATERTES thou now comen first, a sodein gest, into the shadwe or tabernacle of this lyf; or trowest thou that any stedefastnesse be in mannes thinges, when ofte a swift houre dissolveth the same man; that is to seyn, when the soule departeth fro the body? For, although that selde is ther any feith that fortunous thinges wolen dwellen, yit natheles the laste day of amannes lyf is a manere deeth to fortune, and also to thilke that hath dwelt. And therfor, what, wenestow, thar thee recche, yif thou forlete hir in deyninge, or elles that she, fortune, forlete thee in fleeinge away?

Metre III.

Cum polo Phebus roseis quadrigis.

WHATERTES, the sonne, beginningeth to spreden his cleer nesse with rosene chariettes, thanne the sterre, ydimmed, paleth hir whyte cheres, by the flambes of the sonne that overcometh the sterrelight. This is to seyn, when the sonne is risen, the daysterre wexeth pale, and leseth hir light for the grete brightnesse of the sonne.

WHAN the wode wexeth rody of
rosene floures, in the first somer
sesoun, thorough the brette of
the winde Zephirus that wexeth warm, yif
the cloudy wind Auster blowe felliche, than
goth away the fairenesse of thornes.

OFT the see is cleer and calm with/
oute moevinge flodes; and ofte the
horrible wind Aquilon moeveth
boilinge tempestes and overhelveth the
see.

If the forme of this worlde is so
selde stable, and yif it turneth by so
many entrechaunginges, wolt thou
thanne trusten in the tomlinge fortunes
of men? Wolt thou trowen on flittinge
goodes? It is certain and establisshed by
lawe perdurable, that nothing that is en-
gendered nis stedefast ne stable.

Prose IV.

Tunc ego, vera, inquam, commemoras.

THANNE SEIDE I
thus: Onorice of alle
vertues, thou seist
fulsooth; ne I ne may
nat forsake the right
swift cours of my
prosperitee; that is
to seyn, that pros-
peritee ne be comen
to me wonder swift-
ly and sone. But this is a thing that greetly
smerteth me whan it remembreth me. for
in all adversitee of fortune, the most un-
sely kinde of contrarious fortune is to han
ben weleful.

AT that thou, quod she, abyest thus
the torment of thy false opinioun,
that mayst thou nat rightfully blam-
en ne aretten to thinges: as who seith,
for thou hast yit many habundaunces of
thinges.

Text.

AOR al be it so that the ydel name of
aventurous welefulnesse moeveth
theenow, it is lefeul that thou rekne
with me of how manye grete thinges thou
hast yit plente. And therfor, yif that
thilke thing that thou haddest for most
precious in al thy richesse of fortune be
kept to thee yit, by the grace of God, un-
wemmed and undefouled, mayst thou
thanne pleyne rightfully upon the mes-
chef of fortune, sin thou hast yit thy beste
thinges? Certes, yif liveth in good point
thilke precious honour of mankind, Sym-
acus, thy wyves fader, which that is a man
maked alle of sapience and of vertu; the
whiche man thou woldest byen redely with
the prys of thyn owne lyf. He biwayleth
the wronges that men don to thee, and nat
for himself; for he liveth in sikernes of

any sentences put ayeins him. And yit liv-
eth thy wyf, that is atempre of wit, & pas-
singe other wimmen in clenness of cha-
bountees, she is lyk to hir fader. Itellethe
wel, that she liveth looth of this lyf, and
kepeeth to thee only hir goost; and is al
for desyr of thee, in the whiche thing only
I moot graunte that thy welefulnesse is
amenused. What shal I seyn eek of thy two
dren of hir age, ther shyneth the lynnesse
of the wit of hir fader or of hir elder fader?
And sin the sovereyn cure of alle mortel
folk is to saven hir owen lyves, O how wele-
ful art thou, yif thou knowe thy goodes!
for yit ben ther thinges dwelled to thee-
ward, that no man douteth that they ne
ben more dereworthe to thee than thyn
owen lyf. And forthy drye thy teres, for
yit nis nat everich fortune al hateful to
theeward, ne over greet tempest hath nat
yit fallen upon thee, whan that thyn ances-
clevn faste, that neither wolen suffer the
counfort of this tyme present ne the hope
of tyme cominge to passen ne to faylen.

AND I preye, quod I, that faste moten
they halden; for whyles that they
halden, howsoever that thinges ben,
I shal wel fleten forth & escapen; but thou
mayst wel seen how grete aparayles and
aray that me lakketh, that ben passed away
fro me.

IHAVE somewhat avaunced and for-
thered thee, quod she, yif that thou
anoye nat or forthinke nat of al thy
fortune: as who seith, I have somewhat
comforted thee, so that thou tempest thee
nat thus with al thy fortune, sin thou hast
yit thy beste thinges. But I may nat suf-
fren thy delices, that pleyneest so wepinge
& anguissous, for that ther lakketh som-
what to thy welefulnesse. for what man is
so sad or of so parfit welefulnesse, that he
ne stryvethe & pleyneeth on som halve ayein
the qualitee of his estat? for why ful an-
guissous thing is the condicioun of man-
nes goodes; for either it cometh nat alto-
gider to a wight, or elles it last nat perpet-
uel. for sum man hath grete richesches, but
he is ashamed of his ungentel linage; and
som is renowned of noblesse of kinrede,
but he is enclosed in so grete anguisshe of
nede of thinges, that him were lever that he
were unknowe. And som man haboundeth
both in richesche and noblesse, but yit he
bewaileth his chaste lyf, for he ne hath no
wyf. And som man is wel & seily ymari-
ed, but he hath no children, and norisseth his
richesses to the cyres of strange folkis.
And som man is gladed with children, but
he wepeth ful sory for the trespas of his

some or of his doughter. And for this ther
ne acordeth no wight lightly to the condi-
cioun of his fortune; for alway to every man
ther is in somwhat that, unassayed, he ne
wot nat; or elles he dredeth that he hath
not nat; or addre this also, that every
assayed. And adde this also, that every
weleful man hath a ful delicat felinge; so
that, but yif alle thinges bifalle at his owne
wil, for he is impacient, or is nat used to han
non adversitee, anon he is throwen adoun
for every litel thing. And ful litel thinges
ben tho that withdrawen the somme or the
perfeccioun of blisfulnesse fro hem that
ben most fortunat. How many men, trow-
est thou, wolden demen hemself to ben al-
most in hevenc, yif they mighten atayne to
the leest party of the remnaunt of thy for-
tune? This same place that thou clepest
exil, is contree to hem that enhabiten heer,
and forthy nothing is wrecched but whan
thou weneest it; as who seith, thou thyself,
ne no wight elles, nis a wrecche, but whan
he weneeth himself a wrecche by reputacioun
of his corage. And ayeinward, alle fortune
is blisful to a man by the agreabletee or by
the egalitee of him that suffreth it.

WHAT man is that, that is so wele-
ful, that nolde changen his estat
whan he hath lost pacience? The
swetnesse of mannes welefulnesse
is sprayned with many biternesses; the
whiche welefulnesse, although it seme
swete and joyful to hem that useth it, yit
may it nat ben withholden that it ne goth
away whan it wole. Thanne is it wel sene,
how wrecched is the blisfulnesse of mortal
thinges, that neither it dureth perpetuel
with hem that every fortune receiven agre-
ably or egaly, ne it delyteth nat in al to hem
that ben anguissous. O ye mortal folk, what
seche ye thanne blisfulnesse out of your-
self, whiche that is put in yourself? Errour
and folye confoundeth yow.

SHAL shewe thee shortly the poynt
of sovereyne blisfulnesse. Is ther
any thing more precious to thee than
thyself? Thou wolt answeren, Nay. Thanne,
yif it so be that thou art mighty over thy-
self, that is to seyn, by tranquillitee of thy
sowle, than hast thou thing in thy power
that thou noldest never lesen, ne fortune
ne may nat beneme it thee. And that thou
mayest knowe that blisfulnesse ne may nat
standen in thinges that ben fortunous and
temporel, now understonde and gader it
togidre thus: Yif blisfulnesse be the sov-
ereyn good of nature that liveth by resoun,
ne thilke thing nis nat sovereyn good that
may be taken away in any wyse, (for more
worthy thing & more digne is thilke thing
that may nat ben taken away); than shew-
eth it wel, that the unstableness of for-
tune may nat atayne to receiven verray blis-

fulnesse. And yit moreover: what man that
this toumbling welefulnesse ledeth, either
he woot that it is chaungeable, or elles he
woot it nat. And yif he woot it nat, what
blisful fortune may ther be in the blind-
nesse of ignorance? And yif he woot that
it is chaungeable, he moot alway ben adrad
that he ne lese that thing that he ne doubt-
eth nat but that he may lesen it; as who
seith, he mot ben alway agast, lest he lese
that he wot wel he may lese it. for which, the
continuel dreed that he hath, ne suffreth
him nat to ben weleful. Or yif he lese it, he
weneeth to be dyspyssed and forleten. Certes
eek, that is a ful litel good that is born with
evene herte whan it is lost; that is to seyn,
that men don no more fors of the lost than of
the havinge. And for as moche as thou thy-
self art he, to whom it hath ben shewed and
proved by ful manye demonstraciouns, as
I wot wel, that the sowles of men ne mowe
nat deyen in no wyse; and eek sin it is cleer
and certein, that fortunous welefulnesse
endeth by the deeth of the body; it may
nat ben douten that, yif that deeth may
take away blisfulnesse, that alle the kinde
of mortal thinges ne descendeth into wrec-
chednesse by the ende of the deeth. And
sin we knowen wel, that many a man
hath sought the fruit of blisfulnesse nat
only with suffringe of deeth, but eek with
suffringe of peynes and tormentes; how
mighte than this present lyf maken men
blisful, sin that, whan thilke selve lyf is
ended, it ne maketh folk no wrecches?

Metre IV.

*Quisquis volet perennem Cautus ponere
sedem.*

WHAT maner man, stable &
war, that wole founden him
a perdurable sete, & ne wole
nat ben cast down with the
loude blastes of the wind
Eurus; & wole despyse the
see, manasinge with flodes; lat him es-
chewen to bilde on the cop of the moun-
taine or in the moiste sandes. for the felle
wind Auster tormenteth the cop of the
mountaigne with all his strengthes; and
the lause sandes refusen to bren the hev-
y wighte.

AND forthy, if thou wolt fleen the
perilous aventure, that is to seyn,
of the worlde; have minde certeinly
to sicchen thyn hous of a merye site in a
lowe stoon. for although the wind, troub-
ling the see, thondre with overthrowing-
es, thou that art put in quiete, and weleful
by strengthe of thy palis, shalt leden a
cleer age, scorninge the woodnesses and
the irea of the eyr.

WHAT for as mocheas the norissinges of my resouns descend now into thee, I trowe it were tyme to usen a litel strenger medecynes. Now understond heer, al were it so that the yiftes of fortunewerenat brutelne transitorie, what is ther in hem that may be thyn in any tyme, or elles that it nis foul, yif that it be considered and loket perfitly? Richesses, ben they precious by the nature of hemself, or elles by the nature of thee? What is most worth of richesses? Is it nat gold or might of moneye assembled? Certes, thilke gold and thilke moneye shyneth & yeveth betere renoun to hem that despenden it thanne to thilke folk that mokeren it; for avarice maketh alwey mokereres to ben hated, and largesse maketh folk cleer of renoun. for sin that swich thing as is transferred fram o man to another ne may nat dwellen with no man; certes, thanne is thilke moneye precious whan it is translated into other folk and stenteth to ben had, by usage of largeyvinge of him that hath yeven it. And also: yif that al the moneye that is ovel in the worlde were gadered toward o man, it sholde maken alle other men to ben nedey as of that. And certes a voys al hool, that is to seyn, withoute amenusinge, fulfilleth togidere the hering of moche folk; but certes, youre richesses ne mowen nat passen into moche folke withoute amenusinge. And whan they ben apassed, nedes they maken hem pore that forgon the richesses.

STREITE and nedey clepe I this richesse, sin that many folk ne may nat han it al, ne al may it nat comen to o man withouten povertie of alle other folk! And the shyninge of gemmes, that I clepe precious stones, draweth it nat the eyen of folk to hemward, that is to seyn, for the beautee? But certes, yif ther were beautee or bountee in the shyninge of stones, thilke cleernessee is of the stones hemself, and nat of men; for whiche I wondre gretly that men mervailen on swiche things, for why, what thing is it, that yif it wanteth moeving and joynture of sowle and body, that by right mighte semen a fair creature to him that hath a sowle of resoun? for al be it so that gemmes drawen to hemself a litel of the laste beautee of the world, through the entente of hir creatour and through the distinccioun of hemself; yif, for as mochel as they ben put under youre excellence, they ne han nat de-

served by no wey that ye sholden mervailen on hem. And the beautee of feldes, delveth it nat mochel unto yow?

Boece. Why sholde it nat delyten us, sin that it is a right fair porcioun of the right faire werke, that is to seyn, of this world? And right so ben we gladed somtyme of the face of the see whan it is cleer; and also mervailen we on the hevene and on the sterres, and on the sonne & on the mone.

APERTENETH, quod she, any of thilke things to thee? Why darst thou glorifyen thee in the shyninge of any swiche things? Art thou distingwed and embelised by the springing floures of the first somer sesoun, or sweldest thou thy plentee in the frutes of somer? Why art thou ravished with ydel joyes? Why embracest thou straunge goodes as they weren thine? fortune ne shal never maken that swiche things ben thine, that nature of thynges hath maket foreine fro thee. Sooth is that, withouten doute, the frutes of the erthe owen to ben to the norissinge of bestes. And yif thou wolt fulfill thy nedes after that it suffyeth to nature, than is it no nedes that thou seke after the superfluitee of fortune. for with ful fewe things and with ful litel thynges nature halt hir apayed; and yif thou wolt choken the fulfillinge of nature with superfluitees, certes, thilke things that thou wolt thresten or pouren into nature shullen ben unjoyful to thee, or elles anyous. Wenest thou eek that it be a fair thing to shyne with dyverse clothinge? Of whiche clothinge yif the beautee be agreeable to loken upon, I wol mervailen on the nature of the matere of thilke clothes, or elles on the werkman that wroughte hem. But also a long route of meynce, maketh that a blisful man? The whiche servants, yif they ben vicious of condiciouns, it is a greet charge and a distruccioun to the hous, & a greet enemy to the lord himself. And yif they ben goode men, how shal straunge or foreine goodnesse ben put in the noumbre of thy riches? So that, by alle these forside thynges, it is clearly yshewed, that never oon of thilke things that thou accountedest for thyne goodes nas nat thy good. In the whiche things, yif ther be no beautee to ben desyred, why sholdest thou ben sorry yif thou lese hem, or why sholdest thou rejoysen thee to holden hem? for yif they ben faire of hir owne kinde, what aperteneth that to thee? for also wel sholden they han ben faire by hemselfe, though they weren departed fram alle thyn richesses. for why faire ne precious ne weren they nat, for that they comen among thy richesses; but, for they semeden faire and

precious, therfor thou haddest lever rekne hem amonges thy richesses.

BUT what desirest thou of fortune with so grette a noise, and with so grette a fare? I trowe thou seke to drive away nedes with habundaunce of thynges; but certes, it torneth to you al in the contrarie. for why certes, it nedeth of ful manye helpinges to kepen the diversitee of precious ostelments. And sooth it is, that of manye thynges han they nedes that manye thynges han; and ayeinward, of that nedeth hem that mesuren hir fille after the nedes of kinde, and nat after the out-terthe nedes of covetyse. Is it thanne so, that ye men ne han no proper good yset in you, for which ye moten seken outward youre goodes in foreine and subgit thynges? So is thanne the condicioun of thynges torned upsodown, that a man, that is a devyne best by merite of his resoun, thinketh that himself nis neither faire ne noble, but yif it be thorough possessioun of ostelments that ne han no sowles. And certes, al other thynges ben apayed of hir owne beautee; but ye men, that ben semblable to God by your resonable thought, desiren to aparaillen your excellent kinde of the lowest thynges; ne ye understonden nat how grette a wrong ye don to your creatour. for he wolde that mankinde were most worthy & noble of any othere erthely thynges; and ye threste adoun your dignitees benethe the lowest thynges. for yif that al the good of every thinge be more precious than is thilke thing whos that the good is: sin ye demen that the fouleste thynges ben youre goodes, thanne submitten ye and putten yourselfen under tho fouleste thynges by your estimacioun; & certes, this tydeth nat withoute youre desertes. for certes, swiche is the condicioun of alle mankinde, that only whan it hath knowinge of itselfe, than passeth it in noblesse alle other thynges; and whan it forletheth the knowinge of itselfe, than is it brought binethen alle beestes. for why al other livinge beestes han of kinde to knowe nat hemself; but whan that men leten the knowinge of hemself, it cometh hem of vice. But how brodeshe weth the errour and the folye of yow men, that wenen that any thing may ben aparailed with straunge aparailements! But for sothe that may nat ben doon. for yif a wight shyneth with thynges that ben put to him, as thus, if thilke thynges shynen with which a man is aparailed, certes, thilke thynges ben comended and preysed with which he is aparailed; but natheles, the thing that is covered and wrapped under that dwelleth in his filthe.

AND I denye that thilke thing be good that anoyeth him that hath it. Gabbe I of this? Thou wolt seye Nay. Certes, richesses han anoyed ful of the hem that han tho richesses; sin that every wikked shrewe, (and for his wikkednesse the more gredy after other folkes richesses, wher-so ever it be in any place, be it gold or precious stones), weneth him only most worthy that hath hem. Thou thanne, that so bisy dredest now the swerd and now the spere, yif thou haddest entred in the path of this life a voide wayferringe man, than woldest thou singe bifore the theef; as who seith, a pore man, that berth no riches on him by the weye, may boldely singe bifore theves, for he hath nat wherof to ben robbed. O precious and right cleer is the blisfulnesse of mortal richesses, that, whan thou hast geten it, than hast thou lorn thy sikernes!

BLISFUL was the first age of men! They helden hem apayed with the metes that the trewe feldes broughten forth. They ne distroyede nor deceiveden nat hemself without rage. They weren wont lightly to slaken hir hunger at even with acornes of okes. They ne coude nat medly the yifte of Bachus to the cleer hony; that is to seyn, they coude make no piment nor claree; ne they coude nat medle the brighte fleeces of the contree of Seriens with the venim of Tyrie; this is to seyn, they coude nat deyen whyte fleeces of Serien contree with the blode of a maner shelifisshe that men finden in Tyrie, with whiche blood men deyen purpur. They slepen hoolsom slepes upon the gras, & dronken of the renninge wateres; and layen under the shadwes of the heye pyn/trees. Neno gest ne straungerene carf yit the heye see with ores or with shippes; ne they ne hadde seyn yit none newe strondes, to leden marchaundyse into dyverse contrees. Tho weren the cruel clariouns ful hust and ful stille, ne blood yshad by egre hate ne hadde nat deyed yit armures. for wherto or which woodnesse of enemys wolde first moeven armes, whan they seyen cruel woundes, ne none medes be of blood yshad?

WOLDE that oure tymes sholde torne ayein to the oldemaneres! But the anguissous love of havinge brenneth in folk more cruelly than the fyr of the mountaigne Ethna, that ay brenneth. Allas! what was he that first dalf up the gobetes or the weightes of gold covered under erthe, and the precious stones that

wolden han ben hid? He dalf up precious perils. That is to seyn, that he that hem first up dalf, he dalf up a precious peril; forwhy for the preciousnesse of swiche thinge, hath many man ben in peril.

Prose VI.

Quid autem de dignitatibus.

BUT what shal I seye of dignitees and of powers, the whiche ye men, that neither knowen verray dignitee ne verray power, areysen hem as heyne as the hevne? The whiche dignitees and powers, yif they comen to any wikked man, they don as grete damages & destrucciouns as doth the flumbe of the mountaigne Ethna, whan the flumbe walweth up; ne no deluge ne doth so cruel harmes. Certes, thee remembreth wel, as I trowe, that thilke dignitee that men clepen the imperie of consulers, the whiche that whylom was biginninge of freedom, youre eldres coveiteden to han don away that dignitee, for the pryde of the consulers. And right for the same pryde your eldres, biforn that tyme, hadden don away, out of the citee of Rome, the kinges name; that is to seyn, they nolde han no lenger no king. But now, yif so be that dignitees & powers be yeven to goode men, the whiche thing is ful selde, what a greable thing is ther in tho dignitees or powers but only the goodnesse of folkes that usen hem? And therfor it is thus, that honour ne comth nat to vertu for cause of dignitee, but ayeinward honour comth to dignitee for cause of vertu. But whiche is thilke youre dereworthie power, that is so cleer and so requerable? O ye ertheliche bestes, considere ye nat over which thinge that it semeth that ye han power? Now yif thou saye a mous amonges oother mys, that chalaunged to himself ward right & power over alle oother mys, how greet scorn woldst thou han of it! *Glosa.* So fareth it by men; the body hath power over the body, for yif thou loke wel upon the body of a wight, what thing shalt thou finde more freele than is mankinde; the whiche men wel ofte ben slayn with bytinge of smale flies, or elles with the entringe of crepinge wormes into the privetees of mannes body? But wher shal man finden any man that may exercen or haunten any right upon another man, but only upon his body, or elles upon thinges that ben lowere than the body, the whiche I clepe fortounous possessions? Mayst thou ever have any commandement over a free corage? Mayst thou

remuen fro the estat of his propre restea thought that is clyvinge togidre in himself by stedefast resoun? As whylom a corage, and wende to constreine him by en folk that wisten of a conjuracioun, which I clepe a confederacie, that was cast ayeins this tyrant; but this freeman boot of his owne tonge and caste it in the visage of thilke wode tyrant; so that the torments of that this tyrant wende to han made matere of crueltee, this wyse man made it matere of vertu.

BUT what thing is it that a man may don to another man, that he ne may receyven the same thing of othere folk in himself? or thus, what may a man don to folk, that folk ne may don him the same? I have herd told of Busirides, that was wont to sleen his gastes that herberweden in his hous; and he was sleyn himself of Exceles that was his gaste. Regulus hadde taken in bataille many men of Affrike and cast hem into fetters; but some after he moste yewe his handes to ben bounde with the cheynes of hem that he hadde whylom overcome. Wenest thou thanne that he be mighty, that hath no power to don a thing, that othere ne may don in him that he doth in othere? And yit moreover, yif it so were that these dignitees or powers hadden any propre or natural goodnesse in himself, never nolden they comen to shrewes, for contrarious thinges ne ben nat wont to ben yfclawshipped togidre. Nature refuseth that contrarious thinges ben yjoined. And so, as I am in certain that right wikked folk han dignitees of tyme, than sheweth it wel that dignitees and powers ne ben nat goode of hir owne kinde; sin that they suffren hemself to eleven or joinen hem to shrewes. And certes, the same thing may I most digneliche jugen and seyn of alle the yiftes of fortune that most plenteuously comen to shrewes; of the whiche yiftes, I trowe that it oughte ben considered, that no man douteth that he nis strong in whom he seeth strengthe; and in whom that swiftnesse is, sooth it is that he is swift. Also musike maketh musiciens, and phisike maketh phisiciens, and rethorike rethoriens. forwhy the nature of every thing maketh his proprete, ne it is nat entremedled with the effects of the contrarious thinges; and, as of wil, it chaseth out thinges that ben to it contrarie. But certes, richesse may not restreine avarice unstaunched; ne power ne maketh nat a man mighty over himself, whiche that vicious lustes holden destreynd with cheynes that ne mowen nat be unbounden. And dignitees that ben yeven to shrewede

fol nat only ne maketh hem nat digne, but it sheweth rather al openly that they ben unworthy & undigne. And why is it thus? Certes, for ye han joye to clepen thinges with falsenames that beren hem alle in the contrarie; the whiche names ben ful ofte reprovved by the effecte of the same thinges; so that these ilke richesces ne oughten nat by right to ben cleped richesces; ne swich power ne oughte nat ben cleped power; ne swich dignitee ne oughte nat ben cleped dignitee.

AND at the laste, I may conclude the same thing of alle the yiftes of fortune, in which ther nis nothing to ben desired, ne that hath in himself naturel bountee, as it is ful wel ysene. for neither they ne joignen hem nat alwey to goode men, ne maken hem alwey goode to whom that they ben yjoined.

Metre VI.

Novimus quantas dedit ruinas.

AS han wel known how many grete harmes and destrucciouns weren don by the emperor Nero. He leet brenne the citee of Rome, & made sleen the senatoures. And he, cruel, whylom slew his brother; & he was made moist with the blood of his moder; that is to seyn, he leet sleen and slitten the body of his moder, to seen wher he was conceived; and he lokod on every halve upon her cold dede body, ne notere ne wette his face, but he was so hard herted that he mighte ben domes man or juge of hir dede beautytee. And natheles, yit governede this Nero by ceptre alle the poeples that Phebus the sonne may seen, cominge from his outereste arysinge til he hyde his bemes under the waves; that is to seyn, he governede alle the poeples by ceptre imperial that the sonne goth aboute, from est to west. And eek this Nero governed by ceptre alle the poeples that ben under the colde sterres that lighten Septem triones; this is to seyn, he governede alle the poeples that ben under the party of the north. And eek Nero governede alle the poeples that the violent wind Nothus scorkleth, & baketh the brenning sandes by his drye hete; that is to seyn, alle the poeples in the south. But yit ne mighte nat al his hye power torne the woodnesse of this wikked Nero. Alas! it is a grevous fortune, as ofte as wikked sward is joined to cruel venim; that is to seyn, venomous crueltee to lordshippe.

Prose VII.

Tum ego, scis, inquam.



HANNE seyde I thus: Thou wost wel thyself that the coveitise of mortal thinges ne hadde never lordshipe of me; but I have wel desired matere of thinges to done, as who seith, I desire to han matere of governaunce over comunitees, for vertu, stille, ne sholde nat elden, that is to seyn, that him lesteth that, or he wex olde, his vertu, that lay now ful stille, ne should nat perisshe unexercised in governaunce of comune; for which men mighten speken or wryten of his goode government.

Philosophye.

FOR sothe, quod she, and that is a thing that may drawn to governaunce swiche hertes as ben worthy & noble of hir nature; but natheles, it may nat drawn or tollen swiche hertes as ben ybrought to the fulle perfeccioun of vertu, that is to seyn, coveitise of glorie and renoun to han wel administrated the comune thinges or don gode desertes to profit of the comune. for see now & considere, how litel and how voide of alle prys is thilke glorie. Certein thing is, as thou hast lerned by the demonstracioun of astronomye, that al the environinge of the erthe aboute ne halt nat but the resoun of a prikke at regard of the greetnesse of hevne; that is to seyn, that yif ther were made comparisoun of the erthe to the greetnesse of hevne, men wolden jugen in al, that the erthe ne helde no space. Of the whiche litel region of this worlde, the ferthe partye is enhabited with livinge bestes that we knowen, as thou thyself hast ylerned by Tholomee that proveth it. And yif thou haddest withdrawn and abated in thy thought fro thilke ferthe partye as moche space as the see & the mareys contenen & overgoon, & as moche space as the region of droughte overstretcheth, that is to seyn, sandes and desertes, wel unneth sholde ther dwellen a right streit place to the habitaacioun of men. And ye thanne, that ben environed & closed within the leste prikke of thilke prikke, thinken ye to manifesten your renoun & don youre name to ben born forth? But your glorie, that is so narwe and so streite ythrongen into so litel boundes, how mochel coveiteth it in largesse and in greet doinge? And also sette this thereto: that many a nacioun, dyverse of tonge and of maneres and eek of resoun of hir livinge, ben enhabited in the clos of thilke litel ha-

bitacle; to the whiche nacions, what for difficultee of weyes and what for dyversitee of langages, and what for defaute of un-usage and entrecomuninge of marchaundise, nat only the names of singuler men ne may nat stretchen, but eek the fame of citees ne may nat stretchen. At the laste, certes, in the tyme of Marcus Tullius, as himself writ in his book, that the renoun of the comune of Rome ne hadde nat yit passed ne cloumben over the mountaigne that highte Caucasus; and yit was, thilke tyme, Rome wel waxen & greetly redouted of the Parthes and eek of other folk enhabitinge aboute. Seestow nat thanne how streit and how compressed is thilke glorie that ye travailen aboute to shewe and to multiplye? May thanne the glorie of a singuler Romaine stretchen thider as the fame of the name of Rome may nat climben ne passen? And eek, seestow nat that the maneres of dyverse folk and eek hir lawes ben discordaunt among hemself; so that thilke thing that som men jugen worthy of preysinge, other folk jugen that it is worthy of torment? And therof comth it that, though a man delyte him in preysinge of his renoun, he may nat in no wyse bringen forth ne spreden his name to many maner poeples. Therefor every man oughte to ben apayed of his glorie that is publisshed among his owne neighbours; and thilke noble renoun shal ben restreyned within the boundes of o manere folke. But how many a man, that was fulnoble in his tyme, hath the wretched and neddy foryetinge of wryteres put out of minde and don away! Al be it so that, certes, thilke wrytinges profiten litel; the whiche wrytinges long and derk elde doth away, bothe hem & eek hir autours. But ye men semen to geten yow a perdurabletee, whan ye thenken that, in tyme to cominge, your fame shal lasten. But natheles, yif thou wolt maken comparisoun to the endeles spaces of eternitee, what thing hast thou by whiche thou mayst rejoysen thee of long lastinge of thy name? for yif ther were maked comparisoun of the abydinge of a moment to ten thousand winter, for as mochel as bothe the spaces ben ended, yit hath the moment som porcioun of it, although it litel be. But natheles, thilke selve noumbre of yeres, & eek as many yeres as therto may be multiplyed, ne may nat, certes, ben comparisoned to the perdurabletee that is endeles; for of thinges that han ende may be maked comparisoun, but of thinges that ben withouten ende, to thinges that han ende, may be maked no comparisoun. And forthy is it that, although renoun, of as long tyme as ever thee list to thinken, were thought to the regard of eternitee,

that is unstaunchable & infinit, it nesholde nat only semen litel, but pleyneche right nothing aright, but yif it be for the audience of poeple and for ydel rumours; and ye forsaken the grete worthinesse of science and of vertu, & ye seken your gaderouns of the smale wordes of straunge folk.

HAVE now heer and understonde, in the lightnesse of swich pryde and festivity & merily swich vanitee. Whylom stryvinge wordes another man, the whiche, nat for usage of verray vertu but for proud veine glorie, had taken upon him falsly the name of a philosophe. This rather man that I spak of thoughte he wolde assayn, wher he, thilke, were a philosophe or no; that is to seyn, yif that he wolde han suffered lightly in pacience the wronges that weren don unto him. This feynede philosophe took pacience a litel whyle, & whan he hadde received wordes of outrage, he, as in stryvinge ayein and rejoysinge of himself, seyde at the laste right thus: Understondest thou nat that I am a philosophe? That other man answerde ayein ful bryngingly, & seyde: I hadde wel understonden it, yif thou haddest holden thy tonge stille. But what is it to this noble worthy man (for, certes, of swiche folke speke I) that seken glorie with vertu? What is it? quod she; what atteyneth fame to swiche folk, whan the body is resolved by the deeth at the laste? for yif it so be that men dyen in al, that is to seyn, body and soule, the whiche thing our resoun defendeth us to bileven, thanne is ther no glorie in no wyse, for what sholde thilke glorie ben, whan he, of whom thilke glorie is seyde to be, is right naught in no wyse? And yif the soule, which that hath in itself science of goodes werkes, unbounden fro the prison of the erthe, wendeth frely to the hevne, despyseth it nat thanne alle erthely occupacioun; and, being in hevne, rejoyseth that it is exempt fro alle erthely thinges? As who seith, thannerekketh the soule of no glorie of renoun of this world.

Metre VII.

Quicumque solam mente praecepiti petit.

WHOSO that, with overthrowinge thought, only seeketh glorie of fame, and weneith that it be sovereyn good: let him loken upon the brode shewinge contraries of hevne, and upon the streite site of this erthe; and he shal ben ashamed of the encrees of his name, that may nat fulfille the litel compass

of the erthe. O! what coveiten proude folk to liften up hir nekkes in ydel in the dedly yok of this worlde? for although that renoun ysprad, passinge to ferne poeples, goth by dyverse tonges; & although that grete houses or kinredes shynen with clere titles of honours; yit, natheles, deeth despyseth alle heye glorie of fame; and deeth wrappeth togidere the heye hevendes & the lowe, and maketh egal & evene the heyeste to the loweste. Wher wonen now the bones of trewe fabricius? What is now Brutus, or stierne Catoun? The thinne fame, yit lastinge, of hir ydel names, is marked with a fewe lettres; but although that we han knowen the faire wordes of the fames of hem, it is nat yeven to knowe hem that ben dede & consumpte. Liggeth thanne stille, al outrely unknowable; ne fame ne maketh yow nat knowe. And yif ye wene to liven the longer for winde of your mortal name, whan o cruel day shal ravisshe yow, thanne is the seconde deeth dwellinge unto yow. **Glose.** The first deeth he clepeth heer the departinge of the body and the soule; and the seconde deeth he clepeth, as heer, the stinginge of the renoun of fame.

Prose VIII.

Sete me inexorable contra fortunam.

BUT for as mochel as thou shalt nat wene, quod she, that I bere untretable bataille ayeins fortune, yit somtyme it bifalleth that she, deceyvable, deserveth to han right good thank of men; and that is, whan she herself opneth, and whan she discovereth hir frount, and sheweth hir maneres. Peraventure yit understonest thou nat that I shal seye. It is a wonder that I desire to telle, and forthy unnethe may I unpleyten my sentence with wordes; for I deme that contrarious fortune profiteth more to men than fortune debonaire. For alwey, whan fortune semeth debonaire, than she lyeth falsly in bihetinge the hope of wefulnessse; but forsothe contrarious fortune is alwey soothfast, whan she sheweth herself unstable thorough hir chaunginge. The amiable fortune deceyveth folk; the contrarie fortune techeth. The amiable fortune bindeth with the beautee of false goodes the hertes of folk that usen hem; the contrarie fortune unbindeth hem by the knowinge of freele wefulnessse. The amiable fortune mayst thou seen alwey windy and flowinge, and ever misknowinge of herself; the contrarie fortune is atempre and restreyned, & wys

thorough exercise of hir adversitee. At the laste, amiable fortune with hir flateringes draweth miswandringe men fro the sovereyn good; the contrarious fortune ledeth ofte folk ayein to soothfast goodes, and haleth hem ayein as withan hooke. Weneest thou thanne that thou oughtest to leten this a litel thing, that this aspre and horrible fortune hath discovered to thee the thoughtes of thy trewe freendes? forwhy this ilke fortune hath departed and uncovered to thee bothe the certein visages & eek the doutous visages of thy felawes. Whan she departed away fro thee, she took away hir freendes, and laste thee thyne freendes. Now whan thou were riche and weleful, as thee semede, with how mochel woldest thou han bought the fulle knowinge of this, that is to seyn, the knowinge of thy verray freendes? Now pleyne thee nat thanne of richesse ylom, sin thou hast founden the moste precious kinde of riches, that is to seyn, thy verray freendes.

Metre VIII.

Quod mundus stabili fide.

HAT the world with stable feith varieth acordable chaunginges; that the contrarious qualitee of elements holden among hemself aliaunce perdurable; that Phebus the sonne with his goldene chariet bringeth forth the rosene day; that the mone hath commaundement over the nightes, which nightes Hesperus the eversterre hath brought; that the see, greedy to flowen, constreyneth with a certein ende hise floodes, so that it is nat lefeul to stretche hise brode termes or boundes upon the erthes, that is to seyn, to covere al the erthe: al this acordaunce of thinges is bounden with Love, that governeth erthe and see, and hath also commaundements to the hevenes. And yif this Love slakede the brydeles, alle thinges that now loven hem togederes wolden maken a bataille continually, and stryven to fordoon the fasoun of this worlde, the whiche they now leden in acordable feith by faire moevinges. This Love halt togideres poeples joigned withan holy bond, and knitteth sacrament of mariages of chaste loves; & Love endyteth lawes to trewe felawes. O! weleful were mankinde, yif thilke Love that governeth hevne governed youre corages!

Explicit Liber secundus.

DE CONSOLATIONE PHILOSOPHIE. BOOK III. PROSE I.

Iam cantum illa finierat.

In this she hadde ended hir song, when the sweetnesse of hir ditee hadde thoroughperced me that was desirous of herkinge, and I astoned hadde yit streighte myn eres, that is to seyn, to herkne the bet what she wolde seye; so that a litel hereafter I seyde thus: O thou that art sovereyn comfort of anguissous corages, so thou hast remounted & norished me with the weighte of thy sentences and with delyt of thy singinge; so that I trowe nat now that I be unparigal to the strokes of fortune: as who seyth, I dar wel now suffren al the assautes of fortune, and wel defende me fro hir. And tho remedies which that thou seydest herbiform weren right sharpe, nat only that I am nat agrisen of hem now, but I, desirous of heringe, axe gretely to heren the remedies.

WHAN seyde she thus: That felede I ful wel, quod she, when that thou, ententif & stille, ravishedest my wordes; and I abood til that thou haddest swich habite of thy thought as thou hast now; or elles til that I myself hadde maked to thee the same habit, which that is a more verray thing. And certes, the remenaunt of thinges that ben yit to seye ben swiche, that first whan men tasten hem they ben bytinge, but whan they ben receyved withinne a wight, than ben they swete. But for thou seyest that thou art so desirous to herkne hem, with how gret brenninge woldest thou glowen, yif thou wistest whider I wol leden thee!

WHIDER is that? quod I. To thilke verray welefulnesse, quod she, of whiche thyn herte dremeth; but for as moche as thy sighte is occupied and distorted by imaginacioun of erthely thinges, thou mayst nat yit seen thilke selve welefulnesse.

O, quod I, and shewe me what is thilke verray welefulnesse, I preye thee, withoute taryinge. That wole I gladly don, quod she, for the cause of thee; but I wol first marken thee by wordes and I wol enforcen me to enformen thee thilke false cause of blisfulnesse that thou more knowest; so that, whan thou hast fully biholden thilke false goodes, & torned thyn eyen to that other syde, thou mowe knowe the cleernesse of verray blisfulnesse.

Metre I.

Qui serere ingenuum volet agrum.

WHOSO wole sowe a feeld plentifulous, lat him first delivere it fro thornes, and kerve asunder with his hook the busshes & the fern, so that the corn may comen hevy of eres & of greynes. Hony is the more swete, yif mouthes han first tasted savoures that ben wikkid. The sterres shynen more agreeably whan the wind Nothus leteth his ploungy blastis; & after that Lucifer his day sterre hath chased away the derke night, the day the fairere ledeth the derke hors of the sonne. And right so thou, biholdinge first the false goodes, begin to withdrawn thynekke fro the yok of erthely affeccious; and afterward the verray goodes shollen entren into thy corage.

Prose II.

Tunc defixo paululum visu.

WHOSO fastned she a litel the sighte of hir eyen, and withdrew hir right as it were into the streite sete of hir thought; and bigan to speke right thus: Alle the cures, quod she, of mortal folk, whiche that travaylen hem in many maner studies, goon certes by diverse weyes, but natheles they enforcen hem alle to comen only to oon ende of blisfulnesse. And blisfulnesse is swiche a good, that whoso that hath geten it, hene may, over that, nothing more desyre. And this thing is forsothe the sovereyn good that conteyneth in himself alle maner goodes; to the whiche good yif ther failede any thing, it mighte nat ben cleped sovereyn good; for thanne were ther som good, out of this ilke sovereyn good, that mighte ben desired. Now is it cleer and certein thanne, that blisfulnesse is a parfit estat by the congregacioun of alle goodes; the whiche blisfulnesse, as I have seyd, alle mortal folk enforcen hem to geten by diverse weyes. For why the covetise of verray good is naturally yplanted in the hertes of men; but the miswanderinge errour mislede hem into false goodes. Of the whiche men, som of hem wenen that sovereyn good be to liven withoute nede of any thing, and travaylen hem to be haboundaunt of richesses. And som other men demen that sovereyn good be, for to ben right digne of reverence; & enforcen hem to ben revered

among hir neighbours by the honours that they han ygeten. And some folk ther ben that holden, that right heigh power besovcreyn good, & enforcen hem for to regnen, or elles to joignen hem to hem that regnen. And it semeth to some other folk, that noblesse of renoun be the sovereyn good; and hasten hem to geten glorious name by the arts of werre and of pees. And many folk mesuren and gessen that sovereyn good be joye and gladnesse, & wenen that it be right blisful thing to ploungen hem in voluptuous delyt. And ther ben folk that entrechaungen the causes and the endes of thise forseide goodes, as they that desiren richesses to han power & delytes; or elles they desiren power for to han moneye, or for cause of renoun. In thise thinges, and in swiche othere thinges, is torned alle the entencioun of desiringes and of werkes of men; as thus: noblesse and favour of people, whiche that yeveth to men, as it semeth hem, a maner cleernesse of renoun; & wyf and children, that men desiren for cause of delyt and of merinesse. But forsothe, frendes ne sholden nat be rekned among the goodes of fortune, but of vertu; for it is a ful holy maner thing. Alle thise othere thinges, forsothe, ben taken for cause of power or elles for cause of delyt.

CERTES, now am I redy to referren the goodes of the body to thise forseide thinges above; for it semeth that strengthe & gretnesse of body yeven power and worthinesse, and that beautee and swiftnesse yeven noblesse & glorie of renoun; and hele of body semeth yeven delyt. In alle thise thinges it semeth only that blisfulnesse is desired. For why thilke thing that every man desireth most over alle thinges, he demeth that it be the sovereyn good; but I have defyned that blisfulnesse is the sovereyn good; for which every wight demeth, that thilke estat that he desireth over alle thinges, that it be blisfulnesse.

Now hast thou thanne biforn thyn eyen almost al the purposed forme of the welefulnesse of mankinde, that is to seyn, richesses, honours, power, and glorie, and delytes. The whiche delyt only considerede Epicurus, and juged and establissed that delyt is the sovereyn good; for as moche as alle othere thinges, as him thoughte, birefte away joye & mirthe fram the herte. But I retorne ayein to the studies of men, of whiche men the corage alwey reherseth and seketh the sovereyn good, al be it so that it be with a derked memorie; but he not by whiche path, right as a drunken man not nat by whiche path he may retorne him to his hous. Semeth it thanne that folk folyn and erren that enforcen hem to have nede of nothing?

Certes, ther is non other thing that may so wel performe blisfulnesse, as an estat plentifulous of alle goodes, that ne hath nede of non other thing, but that is suffisaunt of himself unto himself. And folyn swiche folk thanne, that wenen that thilke thing that is right good, that it be eek right worthy of honour & of reverence? Certes, nay, for that thing is neither foul ne worthy to ben despised, that wel neigh al the entencioun of mortal folk travaylen for to geten it. And power, oughte nat that eek to ben rekned amonges goodes? What elles? for it is nat to wene that thilke thing, that is most worthy of alle thinges, be feble and withoute strengthe. And cleernesse of renoun, oughte that to ben despised? Certes, ther may no man forsake, that al thing that is right excellent and noble, that it ne semeth to ben right cleer and renowned. For certes, it nedeth nat to seye, that blisfulnesse be nat anguissous ne drery, ne subgit to grevaunces ne to sorwes, sin that in right litel thinges folk seken to have and to usen that may delysten hem. Certes, thise ben the thinges that men wolen & desiren to geten. And for this cause desiren they richesses, dignitees, regnes, glorie, and delices. For therby wenen they to han suffisaunce, honour, power, renoun, and gladnesse. Chan is it good, that men seken thus by so many diverse studies. In whiche desyr it may lightly ben shewed how gret is the strengthe of nature; for how so that men han diverse sentences and discordinge, algates men acorden alle in lovinge the ende of good.

Metre II.

Quantas rerum flectat habenas.

Illyketh me to shewe, by subtil song, with slakke and delitable soun of strenges, how that Nature, mighty, enclinneth and flitteth the governments of thinges, and by whiche lawes she, purveyable, kepeth the grete world; & how she, bindinge, restreyneth alle thinges by a bonde that may nat ben unbounde. Al be it so that the lyouns of the contre of Pene beren the faire chaynes, and taken metes of the handes of folk that yeven it hem, and dreden hir sturdy maystres of whiche they ben wont to suffren betinges: yif that hir horrible mouthes ben bebled, that is to seyn, of bestes devoured, hir corage of time passed, that hath ben ydel & rested, repeyareth ayein; and they roren grevously and remembre on hir nature, & slaken hir nekkes fram hir chaynes unbounde; and hir mayster, first totorn with bloody tooth, assayeth the wode wrathes of hem; this is to seyn, they freten hir mayster. And the jangel-

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Book III.

ingebrid that singeth on the heye braunch/ es, that is to seyn, in the wode, and after is enclosed in a streyt cage: although that the pleyinge businesse of men yeveth hem honiede drinkes & large metes with swete studie, yit natheles, yif thilke brid, skip- pinge out of hir streyte cage, seeth the a- greables shadewes of the wodes, she de- fouleth with hir feet hir metes yshad, and seketh mourninge only the wode; & twit- ereth, desiringe the wode, with hir swete vois. The yerde of a tree, that is haled a- doun by mighty strengthe, boweth redily the crop adoun: but yif that the hand of him that it bente lat it gon ayein, anon the crop loketh upright to hevne. The sonne Phebus, that falleth at even in the west- rene wawes, retorneth ayein eftsones his carte, by privee path, theras it is wont a- ryse. Alle thinges seken ayein to hir propre cours, and alle thinges rejoysen hem of hir retorninge ayein to hir nature. Ne non or- dinaunce nis bitaken to thinges, but that that hath joyned the endinge to the begin- ninge, and hath makid the cours of itself stable, that it chaungeth nat from his propre kinde.

Prose III.

Vos quoque, o terrena animalia.



CERTES also ye men, that ben etherliche beestes, dremen alwey youre be- ginninge, although it be with a thinne imaginacioun; & by a maner thoughte, albe it nat cleerly ne parfittly, ye token fram afer to thilke verray fyn of blisful- nesse; & therefore naturel entenciou ledeth you to thilke verray good, but many maner errours mistorneth you therfro. Consider now yif that by thilke thinges, by whiche a man weneth to geten him blisfulnesse, yif that he may comen to thilke ende that he weneth to come by nature. for yif that moneye or honours, or thise other for- seyde thinges bringen to mens wich a thing that no good ne fayle hem ne semeth fayle, certes than wole I graunte that they ben makid blisful by thilke thinges that they han geten. But yif so be that thilke thinges ne mowen nat performen that they bihten, and that ther be defaute of manye goodes, sheweth it nat thanne cleerly that fals beautee of blisfulnesse is knowen and a- teint in thilke thinges? first and forward thou thyself, that haddest habundaunces of riches nat long agon, I axe yif that, in the habundaunce of alle thilke riches, thou were never anguissous or sory in thy

corage of any wrong or grevaunce that bi- tidde thee on any syde?

CERTES, quod I, it ne remembreth me nat that evere I was so free of my thought that I ne was alwey in anguiss of somwhat.

AND was nat that, quod she, for that thee lakked somwhat that thou noldest that thou noldest, or elles thou haddest that thou noldest nat han had? Right so is it, quod I.

THANNE desiredest thou the pre- sence of that oon and the absence of that other? I graunte wel, ther somwhat that every man desiredest, quod I. forsothe, quod she, than nedest thou somwhat that every man desiredest? Ye, ther nedest, quod I.

CERTES, quod she, & he that hath lakke or nede of aught nis nat in every wey suffisaunt to himself? No, quod I.

AND thou, quod she, in al the plente of thy riches haddest thilke lakke of suffisaunce? What elles? quod I.

THANNE may nat riches maken a man suffisaunt to himself; & that was it that they bihten, as it semeth. And eek certes I trowe, that this be gretly to considere, that moneye ne hath nat in his owne kinde that it ne may ben binomen of hem that han it, maugre hem? I bihtenwe it wel, quod I.

WHY sholdest thou nat bihtenwe it, quod she, when every day the stronger folk binemen it fro the febler, maugre hem? for whennes comen elles alle thise foreyne compleyntes or quereles of pletinges, but for that men axen ayein here moneye that hath ben bi- nomen hem by force or by gyle, and alwey maugre hem? Right so is it, quod I.

THAN, quod she, hath a man nede to seken him foreyne helpe by whiche he may defende his moneye? Who may sey nay? quod I.

CERTES, quod she; & him nedede non help, yif he ne hadden moneye that he mighte lese? That is douteles, quod I.

THAN is this thinge torned into the contrarye, quod she, for riches, that men wenen sholde make suffi- saunce, they maken a man rather han nede of foreyne help! Which is the manere or the gyse, quod she, that riches may dryve away nede? Riche folk, may they neither han hunger ne thurst? Thise riche men, may they fele no cold on hir limes on win- ter? But thou wolt answeren, that riche men han ynowherwith they may staunchen hir hunger, slaken hir thurst, and don away cold. In this wyse may nede be coun-

forced by riches; but certes, nede ne may nat aloutrely ben don away, for though this nede, that is alwey gappinge and gredy, be fulfilled with riches, & axe any thing, yit dwelleft thanne a nede that mighte be fulfilled. I holdemestille, & telle nat how that litel thing suffiseth to nature; but certes to avarice ynough ne suffiseth nothing. for sin that riches ne may nat al don away nede, but riches maken nede, what may it thanne be, that ye wenen that riches mowen yeven you suffisaunce?

Metre III.

Quamvis fluente dives auri gurgite.

WERE it so that a riche covey- tous man hadde a river flet- inge al of gold, yit sholde it never staunchen his covetise; and though he hadde his necke ycharged with preci- ous stones of the rede see, and though he do ere his feldes plentivous with an hun- dred oxen, never ne shal his bytinge bisi- nesse forleten him whyl he liveth, ne the lighte riches ne sholle nat beren him compaigne whan he is ded.

Prose IV.

Set dignitates.

WHAT dignitees, to whom they ben comen, mak- en they him honorable & reverent? Han they nat so gret strengthe, that they may putte vertues in the hertes of folk that usen the lordshipes of hem? Or elles may they don away the vyces? Certes, they ne benat wont to don away wikkednesse, but they ben wont rather to shewen wikkednesse. And therof comth it that I have right grete des- deryn, that dignitees ben yeven of to wikked men; for which thing Catullus cleped a consul of Rome, that highte Nonius, Postum or Boch; as who seyth, he cleped him a congregacioun of vyces in his brest, as a postum is ful of corrupcioun, al were this Nonius set in a chayre of dignitee. Seest thou nat thanne how gret vilenye dignitees don to wikked men? Certes, un- worthinesse of wikked men sholde be the lasse ycene, yif they nere renommed of none honours. Certes, thou thyself ne mightest nat ben brought with as manye perils as thou mightest suffren that thou woldest beren the magistrat with Decorat; that is to seyn, that for no peril that mighte be- fallen thee by offence of the king Theo- dorike, thou noldest nat be felawe in gov- ernance with Decorat; whan thou saye

that he hadde wikked corage of a likerous shrewe and of an accuser. Ne I ne may nat, for swiche honours, jugen hem worthy of reverence, that I deme and holde unworthy to han thilke same honours. Now yif thou saye a man that were fulfilled of wisdom, certes, thou ne mightest nat deme that he were unworthy to the honour, or elles to the wisdom of which he is fulfilled? No, quod I. Certes, dignitees, quod she, a- pertienen proprely to vertu; & vertu trans- porteth dignitee anon to thilke man to which she herself is conjoined. And for as moche as honours of poeple ne may nat maken folk digne of honour, it is wel seyn cleerly that they ne han no propre beautee of dignitee. And yit men oughten taken more heed in this. for yif it so be that a wikked wight beso mochel the foulere and the more outcast, that he is despyssed of most folk, so as dignitee ne may nat mak- en shrewes digne of reverence, the which shrewes dignitee sheweth to moche folk, thanne maketh dignitee shrewes rather so moche more despyssed than preyssed; and forsothe nat unpunished: that is for to seyn, that shrewes revengen hem ayein- ward upon dignitees; for they yilden ayein to dignitees as gret guerdoun, whan they bispotten and defoulen dignitees with hir vilenye. And for as mochel as thou mowe knowe that thilke verray reverence ne may nat comen by thise shadewy transitorie dignitees, undirstond now thus: yif that a man hadde used & had many maner dig- nitees of consules, and were comen pera- venture amonge straungenaciouns, sholde thilke honour maken him worshipful and redouted of straunge folk? Certes, yif that honour of poeple were a naturel yift to dignitees, it ne mighte never cesen no- wher amonges no maner folk to don his office, right as fyr in every contrene stint- eth nat to eschaufen and to ben hoot. But for as moche as for to ben holden honour- able or reverent ne cometh nat to folk of hir propre strengthe of nature, but only of the false opinioun of folk, that is to seyn, that wenen that dignitees maken folk dig- ne of honour; anon therfore whan that they comen theras folk ne knowen nat thilke dignitees, hir honours vanisschen away, & that anon. But that is amonges straunge folk, mayst thou seyn; but amonges hem ther they weren born, ne duren nat thilke dignitees alwey? Certes, the dignitee of the provostrie of Rome was whylom a gret power; now is it nothing but an ydelname, & the rente of the senatorie a gret charge. And yif a wight whylom hadde the office to taken hede to the vitales of the poeple, as of corn & other thinges, he was holden a- monges grete; but what thing is now more

outcast thanne thilke provostrie? And, as I have seyde a litel herbiform, that thilke thing that hath no propre beautee of himself receiveth somtyme prys & shyninge, and somtyme leseth it by the opinioun of usaunces. Now yif that dignitees thanne ne mowen nat maken folk digne of reverence, and yif that dignitees wexen foule of hir wille by the filthe of shrewes, & yif that dignitees lesen hir shyninge by chaunginge of tymes, and yif they wexen foule by estimacioun of poeple: what is it that they han in hemself of beautee that oughte ben desired? as who seyth, non; thanne ne mowen they yeven no beautee of dignitee to non other.

Metre IV.

Quamvis se, Tyrus superbus ostro.

Al be it so that the proude Nero, with alle his wode luxurie, kembde him & aparailde him with faire purples of Cirie, and with whyte perles, al gates yit thow he hateful to alle folk: this is to seyn, that al was he behated of alle folk. Yit this wikked Nero hadde gret lordship, and yaf whylom to the reverents senatours the unworshipful setes of dignitees. Unworshipful setes he clepeth here, for that Nero, that was so wikked, yaf tho dignitees. Whoso wolde thanne reasonably wenen, that blisfulnesse were in swiche honours as ben yeven by vicious shrewes?

Prose V.

An vero regna regumque familiaritas.

At regnes and familiaritees of kinges, may they maken a man to ben mighty? How elles, whan hir blisfulnesse dureth perpetually? But certes, the olde age of tyme passed, and eek of present tyme now, is ful of ensamples how that kinges ben chaunged into wrecchednesse out of hir welefulnesse. O! a noble thing and a cleer thing is power, that is nat founden mighty to kepen itself! And yif that power of reaumes be auctour and maker of blisfulnesse, yif thilke power laketh on any syde, amenuseth it nat thilke blisfulnesse and bringeth in wrecchednesse? But yit, al be it so that the reaumes of mankinde stretchen brode, yit mot ther nede ben moche folk, overwhiche that every king ne hath no lordship ne comaundement. And certes, upon thilke syde that power failleth, which that maketh folk blisful, right on that same

sydenoun/power entreth undermeth, that maketh hem wrecches; in this manere of wrecchednesse than of welefulnesse. A tyraunt, that was king of Sisile, that hadde assayed the peril of his estat, shew gastnesse of a swerd that heng over the heved of his familier. What thing is thanne this power, that may nat don awey the tinges of bisnesse, ne eschewe the prikkes of drede? And certes, yit wolden they liven in sikernes, but they may nat; and yit they glorifye hem in hir power. Holdest thou thanne that thilke man be mighty, that thou seest that he wolde don that he may nat don? And holdest thou thanne him a mighty man, that hath enviermede his sydes with men of armes or serjaunts, & dredeth more hem that he maketh agast than they dreden him, and that is put in the handes of his servaunts for he sholde seme mighty? But of familieres or servaunts of kinges what sholde I telle thee anything, sin that I myself have shewed thee that reaumes hemself ben ful of grete feblesse? The whiche familieres, certes, the ryal power of kinges, in hool estat and in estat abated, ful ofte throweth adown. Nero constreynede Senek, his familier and his mayster, to chesen on what deeth he wolde deyen. Antonius comaundede that knightes slown with hir swerdes Papinian his familier, which Papinian hadde ben longe tyme ful mighty amonges hem of the court. And yit, certes, they wolden bothe han renounced hir power; of whiche two Senek enforcede him to yeven to Nero his riches, & also to han gon into solitarie exil. But whan the grete weighte, that is to seyn, of lordes power or of fortune, draweth hem that shullen falle, neither of hem ne mighte do that he wolde. What thing is thanne thilke power, that though men han it, yit they ben agast; and whanne thou woldest han it, thou nart nat siker; & yif thou woldest forleten it, thou mayst nat eschuen it? But whether swiche men ben frendes at nede, as ben conseyled by fortune and nat by vertu? Certes, swiche folk as weleful fortune maketh frendes, contrarious fortune maketh hem enemyes. And what pestilence is more mighty for to noye a wight than a familier enemy?

Metre V.

Qui se volet esse potentem.

HOSO wol be mighty, he mot daunten his cruel corage, ne putte nat his nekke, overcome, under the foule reynes of lecherye, for albeit so that thy lordship stretche sofor

that the contree of Inde quaketh at thy comaundements or at thy lawes, and that the last ile in the see, that hight Tyle, be thral to thee, yit, yif thou mayst nat putten away thy foule derke desyrs, & dryven out fro thee wrecched complaints, certes, it is no power that thou hast.

Prose VI.

Gloria vero quam fallax saepe.

At glorie, how deceivable and how foul is it ofte! for which thing nat unskilfully a tragedien, that is to seyn, a maker of dittes that highten tragedies, cryde & seide: O glorie, glorie, quod he, thou art nothing elles to thousandes of folkes but a greet sweller of eres! For manye han had ful greet renoun by the false opinioun of the poeple, and what thing may ben thought fouler than swiche preysinge? for thilke folk that ben preyed falsly, they moten nedes han shame of hir preysinges. And yif that folk han gotten hem thonk or preyse by hir desertes, what thing hath thilke preyseched or encreased to the conscience of wyse folk, that mesuren hir good, nat by the rumour of the poeple, but by the soothfastnesse of conscience? And yif it seme a fair thing, a man to han encreased and sprad his name, than folweth it that it is demed to ben a foul thing, yif it ne be ysprad and encreased. But, as I seyde a litel herbiform that, sin ther mot nedes ben many folk, to whiche folk the renoun of a man ne may nat comen, it befalleth that he, that thou weneest be glorious and renowned, semeth in the nexte partie of the erthe to ben withoute glorie and withoute renoun.

And certes, amonges thise thinges I netrowenat that the prys & grace of the poeple is neither worthy to ben remembred, ne cometh of wyse jugement, ne is ferme perdurably. But now, of this name of gentillesse, what man is it that ne may wel seen how veyn & how flittinge a thing it is? for yif the name of gentillesse be referred to renoun & cleernesse of linage, thanne is gentil name but a foreine thing, that is to seyn, to hem that glorifyen hem of hir linage. for it semeth that gentillesse be a maner preysinge that cometh of the deserte of ancestres. And yif preysinge maketh gentillesse, thanne moten they nedes be gentil that ben preyed. for which thing it folweth, that yif thou ne have no gentillesse of thyself, that is to seyn, preyse that cometh of thy deserte,

foreine gentillesse ne maketh the nat gentil. But certes, yif ther be any good in gentillesse, I trowe it be alonly this, that it semeth as that a maner necessitee be imposed to gentil men, for that they ne sholden nat outrayen or forliven fro the virtues of hir noble kinrede.

Metre VI.

Omne hominum genus in terris.

At the linage of men that ben in erthe ben of semblable birthe. On allone is fader of thinges. On allone ministrereth alle thinges. He yaf to the sonne hise bemes; he yaf to the mone hir hornes. He yaf the men to the erthe; he yaf the sterres to the hevene. He encloseth with membres the soules that comen fro his hye sete. Thanne comen alle mortal folk of noble sede; why noisen ye or bosten of youre eldres? for yif thou loke your biginninge, and God your auctour & your maker, thanne nis ther no forlived wight, but yif he norisshe his corage unto vyces, and forlete his propre burthe.

Prose VII.

Quid autem de corporis voluptatibus.

At what shal I seye of delices of body, of whiche delices the desiringes ben ful of anguisshe, & the fulfillinges of hem ben ful of penaunce? How greet syknesse and how gret sorwes unsufferable, right as a maner fruit of wikkednesse, ben thilke delices wont to bringen to the bodies of folk that usen hem! Of whiche delices I not what joye may ben had of hirmoevinge. But this wot I wel, that whosoever wole remembre him of hise luxures, he shal wel understonde that the issues of delices ben sorwful & sorye. And yif thilke delices mowen maken folk blisful, than by the same cause moten thise bestes ben cleped blisful; of whiche bestes al the entencioun hasteth to fulfille hir bodily jolitee. And the gladnesse of wyf and children were an honest thing, but it hath ben seyde that it is overmuchel ayeins kinde, that children han ben founden tormentours to hir fadres, I not how manye: of whiche children how bytinge is every condicioun, it nedeth nat to tellen it thee, that hast or this tyme assayed it, and art yit now anguissous. In this approve I the sentence of my disciple Euripidis, that seyde, that he that hath no children is weleful by infortune.

VERY delythath this, that it anguisseth hem with prikketh that usen it. It resemblith to thise flyng flyes that we clepen been, that, after that he hath shad hise agreable honies, he fleeth away, and stingeth the hertes, of hem that ben yamite, with byttinge overlonge holdinge.

NOW is it no doute thanne that thise weyes ne ben a manner misledinges to blisfulnesse, ne that they ne mowe nat leden folk thider as they biheten to leden hem. But with how grete harmes thise forseide weyes ben enlaced, I shal shewe thee shortly. forwhy yif thou enforcest thee to assemble moneye, thou most bireven him his moneye that hath it. And yif thou wolt shynen with dignitees, thou most bisechen & supplien hem that yeven tho dignitees. And yif thou coveitest by honour to gon bifrom other folk, thou shalt defoule thyself thorough humblesse of axinge. Yif thou desirest power, thou shalt by awaytes of thy subgits anoyously ben cast under manye periles. Axest thou glorie? Thou shalt ben so destrat by aspre thinges that thou shalt forgoon sikernes. And yif thou wolt leden thy lyf in delices, every wight shal despisen thee and forleten thee, as thou that art thral to thing that is right foul & brotel; that is to seyn, servaunt to thy body. Now is it thanne wel seen, how litel & how brotel possessioun they coveiten, that putten the goodes of the body aboven hir owne resoun. for mayst thou sormounten thise olifaunts in gretnesse or weight of body? Or mayst thou ben stronger than the bole? Mayst thou ben swifter than the tygre? Bihold the spaces and the stablenesse & the swift cours of the hevenc, and stint somtyme to wondren on foule thinges; the which hevenc, certes, nis nat rather for thise thinges to ben wondred upon, than for the resoun by which it is governed. But the shyning of thy forme, that is to seyn, the beautee of thy body, how swiftly passinge is it, and how transitorie; certes, it is more flittinge than the mutabilitee of flowers of the somersesoun. for so Aristotle telleth, that yif that men hadden eyen of a beest that highte lynx, so that the lokinge of folk mighte percen

thorough the thinges that withstonden it, whoso loked thanne in the entrailes of the body of Alcibiades, that was ful fayr in the superfece withoute, it shold seme prikketh thy nature maketh nat that, but the devalence of the feblesse of the eyen that as moche as ever thee list; so that thou knowe algates that, whatso it be, that is to seyn, of the goodes of thy body, which that thou wondrest upon, may ben destroyed or dissolved by the hete of a fevre of three dayes. Of alle whiche forseide thinges I may reducen this shortly in a somme, that thise worldly goodes, whiche that ne mowen nat yeven that they biheten, ne ben nat parfit by the congregacioun of alle goodes; that they ne ben nat weyes ne pathes that bringen men to blisfulnesse, ne maken men to ben blisful.

ALAS! which folye and which ignorance misledeth wandringe wrecches fro the path of verray goodes! Certes, yene seeken no gold in grene trees, ne ye ne gaderen nat precious stones in the vynges, ne yene hyden nat your gynnies in the hye mountaignes to cacchen fish of whiche ye may maken riche festes. And yif yow lyketh to hunte to roes, ye ne gon nat to the fordes of the water that highte Tyrene. And over this, men knowen wel the crykes and the cavernes of the see yhid in the flodes, and knowen eek which water is most plentivous of whyte perles, and knowen which water haboundeth most of rede purple, that is to seyn, of a manner shellefish with which men dyen purple; & knowen which strondes habounden most with tendre fisses, or of sharpe fisses that highten echines. But folk suffren hemself to ben so blinde, that hem ne receth nat to knowe where thilke goodes ben yhid whiche that they coveiten, but ploungen hem in erthe & seeken there thilke good that sormounteth the hevenc that bereth the sterres. What preyere may I maken that be digne to the nyce thoughtes of men? But I preye that they coveiten riches and honours, so that, whan they han geten tho false goodes with greet trauaile, that therby they mowe knowen the verray goodes.

I SUFFYSETH that I have shewed hiderto the forme of false welefulnesse, so that, yif thou loke now cleerly, the order of myn entencioun requireth from henneth forth to shewen thee the verray welefulnesse.

FOR sothe, quod I, I see wel now that suffisaunce may nat comen by riches, ne power by reames, ne reverence by dignitees, ne gentillesse by glorie, ne joye by delices. And hast thou wel knownen the causes, quod she, why it is?

CERTES, me semeth, quod I, that I see hem right as though it were thorough a litel clifte; but me were levere knowen hem more openly of thee.

CERTES, quod she, the resoun is at redy, for thilke thing that simply is o thing, withouten any devisioun, the errour and folye of mankinde departeth and devydeh it, and misledeth it and transporteth from verray and parfit good to goodes that ben false and unparfit. But seyme this. Wenest thou that he, that hath nede of power, that him ne lakketh nothing? Nay, quod I.

CERTES, quod she, thou seyst a right, for yif so be that ther is a thing, that in any partye be febler of power, certes, as in that, it mot nedes ben neddy of foreine help. Right so is it, quod I.

SUFFISAUNCE & power ben thanne of o kinde? So semeth it, quod I. And demest thou, quod she, that a thing that is of this manere, that is to seyn, suffisaunt and mighty, oughte ben despyed, or elles that it be right digne of reverence aboven alle thinges? Certes, quod I, it nis no doute, that it is right worthy to ben revered.

HT us, quod she, adden thanne reverence to suffisaunce & to power, so that we demen that thise three thinges ben al o thing. Certes, quod I, lat us adden it, yif we wolen graunten the sothe.

WHAT demest thou thanne? quod she; is that a derk thing and nat noble, that is suffisaunt, reverent, and mighty, or elles that it is right noble & right cleer by celebritee of renoun? Consider thanne, quod she, as we han graunted her bifore, that he that ne hath nede of nothing, and is most mighty & most digne of honour, yif him nedeth any cleernesse

of renoun, which cleernesse he mighte nat graunten of himself, so that, for lakke of thilke cleernesse, he mighte seme the febler on any syde or the more outcast? **Glose.** This is to seyn, nay; for whoso that is suffisaunt, mighty, & reverent, cleernesse of renoun folweth of the forseide thinges; he hath it al redy of his suffisaunce.

Boece. I may nat, quod I, denye it; but I mot graunte as it is, that this thing be right celebrable by cleernesse of renoun and noblesse.

HANNE folweth it, quod she, that we adden cleernesse of renoun to the three forseide thinges, so that ther ne be amonges hem no difference? This is a consequence, quod I.

THIS thing thanne, quod she, that ne hath nede of no foreine thing, & that may don alle thinges by hise strengthes, and that is noble and honourable, nis nat that a mery thing & a joyful? But whennes, quod I, that any sorwe mighte comen to this thing that is swiche, certes, I may nat thinke.

HANNE moten we graunte, quod she, that this thing be ful of gladnesse, yif the forseide thinges ben sothe; and certes, also mote we graunten that suffisaunce, power, noblesse, reverence, and gladnesse ben only dyverse by names, but hir substaunce hath no diversitee. It mot needly been so, quod I.

LIKE thing thanne, quod she, that is oon & simple in his nature, the wikkednesse of men departeth it and devydeh it; and whan they enforcen hem to geten partye of a thing that ne hath no part, they ne geten hem neither thilke partye that nis non, ne the thing al hool that they ne desire nat. In which manere? quod I.

LIKE man, quod she, that sebeth riches to fleeen povertie, he ne trauaileth him nat for to gete power; for he hath levere ben derk and vyl; and eek withdraweth from himself many naturel delys, for he nolde lese the moneye that he hath assembled. But certes, in this manere he ne geteth him nat suffisaunce that power forleteth, and that molestie prikketh, and that filthe maketh outcast, and that derkenesse hydeth. And certes, he that desireth only power, he wasteth and scattereth riches, and despyseth delys, & eek honour that is withoute power, ne he ne preyseth glorie nothing. Certes, thus seest thou wel, that manye thinges faylen to him; for he hath somtyme defaute of many necessitees, and many anguissches byten him; and whan he ne may nat don tho defautes away, he forleteth to ben mighty, and that is the thing that he

most desireth. And right thus may I maken semblable resouns of honours, and of glorie, and of delitys. for so as every of these forseide thinges is the same that thise other thinges ben, that is to seyn, al oon thing, whoso that ever seketh to geten that oon of thise, and nat that other, he ne geteth nat that he desireth. **Boece.** What seyst thou thanne, yif that a man coveiteth to geten alle thise thinges togider?

Philosophie.

CERTES, quod she, I wolde seye, that he wolde geten him sovereyn blisfulnesse; but that shal he nat finde in tho thinges that I have shewed, that ne mowen nat yeven that they behe-ten. **Certes**, no, quod I.

THANNE, quod she, ne sholden men nat by no wey seken blisfulnesse in swiche thinges as men wene that they ne mowen yeven but o thing seugely of alle that men seken. **I** graunte wel, quod I; ne no sother thing ne may ben sayd.

NOW hast thou thanne, quod she, the forme and the causes of false welefulnesse. Now torne and flitte the eyen of thy thought; for ther shalt thou sen anon thilke verray blisfulnesse that I have bihight thee. **Certes**, quod I, it is cleer and open, thogh it were to a blinde man; and that shewedest thou me ful wel a litel herbyform, whan thou enforcedest thee to shewe me the causes of the false blisfulnesse. for but yif I be bigyled, thanne is thilke the verray blisfulnesse parfit, that parfitly maketh a man suffisaunt, mighty, honourable, noble, and ful of gladnesse. And, for thou shalt wel knowe that I have wel understanden thise thinges within my herte, I knowe wel that thilke blisfulnesse, that may verrayly yeven oon of the forseide thinges, sin they ben al oon, I knowe, douteles, that thilke thing is the fulle blisfulnesse.

Philosophie.

MY norie, quod she, by this opin-
ion I seye that thou art blisful,
yif thou putte this therto that I
shal seyn. What is that? quod I.

ROUDEST thou that ther be any
thing in thise erthely mortal toum-
bling thinges that may bringen
this estat? **Certes**, quod I, I trowe it
naught; and thou hast shewed me wel that
over thilke good ther nis nothing more to
ben desired.

THISE thinges thanne, quod she, that
is to sey, erthely suffisaunce & power
& swiche thinges, either they semen
lykenesses of verray good, or elles it sem-
eth that they yeve to mortal folk a maner
of goodes that ne ben nat parfit; but thilke
good that is verray and parfit, that may

they nat yeven. **I** acorde me wel, quod I.
THANNE, quod she, for as moche
as thou hast knowen which is thilke
thilke thinges ben that lyen falsly blisful-
nesse, that is to seyn, that by deceite sem-
en verray goodes, now behoveth thee to
knowe whennes and where thou mowest
thilke verray blisfulnesse. **Certes**, quod
I, that desire I greetly, and have abiden
longe tyme to herkennen it.

AT for as moche, quod she, as it
lyketh to my disciple Plato, in his
book of In Timeo, that in right like
thinges men sholden bisechen the help of
God, what jagest thou that benow to dome
so that we may deserve to finde the sete of
thilke verray good? **Certes**, quod I, I
deme that we shollen cleepen the fader of
alle goodes; for withouten him nis ther
nothing founden aught. **Thou** seyst a-
right, quod she; and bigan anon to singen
right thus:

Metre IX.

Qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas.

THOU fader, creator of he-
vene and of erthes, that gov-
ernest this world by per-
durableresoun, that comaund-
est the tymes to gon from
sin that age hadde begin-
ninge; thou that dwellest thyself a stede
fast and stable, & yevest alle othere thinges
to ben moeved; ne foreine causes necesse-
den thee never to compounen werk of flou-
ringe matere, but only the forme of sove-
rein good yset within thee withoute envye,
that moeved thee freely. Thou that art al-
derfayrest, beringe the faire world in thy
thought, formedest this world to the phy-
nesse semblable of that faire world in thy
thought. Thou drawest al thing of thy
soverain ensampler, & comaundest that
this world, parfitliche ymaked, have frech
& absolut his parfit parties. Thou bindest
the elements by noumbres proporcion-
ables, that the colde thinges mowen acor-
den with the hote thinges, and the drye
thinges with the moiste thinges; that the
fyr, that is purest, ne flee nat over hye,
ne that the hevynesse ne drawe nat adoun
over/lowe the erthes that ben plouged in
the wateres. Thou knittest togider the
mene sowle of treble kinde, moevinge alle
thinges, and devydest it by membres a-
cordinge; & whan it is thus devyded, it hath
assembled a moevinge into two roundes;
it goth to torne ayein to himself, and en-
rouneth a ful deep thought, and torneth
the hevене by semblable image. Thou by
evene/lyke causes enhanscest the sowles &
the lasse lyves, and, ablinge hem heye by

lighte cartes, thou sowest hem into hevене
and into erthe; & whan they ben converted
to thee by thy benigne lawe, thou makest
hem retorne ayein to thee by ayein/ledinge
fyr.

FADER, yive thou to the thought
to styen up into thy streite sete,
and graunte him to envroune the
welle of good; and, the lighte yfounde,
graunte him to fichen the clere sightes of
his corage in thee. And scatter thou and to-
breke thou the weightes & the cloudes of
erthely hevynesse, and shyne thou by thy
brighnesse. for thou art cleernesse; thou
art peysible reste to debonaire folk; thou
thyself art biginninge, verer, leder, path,
& terme; to loke on thee, that is our ende.

Prose X.

Quoniam igitur quae sit imperfecti.

OR as moche thanne
as thou hast seyn,
which is the forme
of good that nis nat
parfit, & which is the
forme of good that
is parfit, now trowe I
that it were good to
shewe in what this
perfeccioun of blis-
fulnesse is set. And in this thing, I trowe
that we sholden first enquire for to witen,
yif that any swiche maner good as thilke
good that thou hast diffinissed a litel heer-
byform, that is to seyn, soverain good, may
ben founden in the nature of thinges; for that
weyn imaginacioun of thought ne deceyve
us nat, and putte us out of the sothfast-
nesse of thilke thing that is summited
unto us. But it may nat ben denyed that
thilke good ne is, and that it nis right as
welle of alle goodes. for al thing that is
cleped inparfit is proeved inparfit by the a-
menusinge of perfeccioun or of thing that
is parfit. And therof comth it, that in every
thing general, yif that men sen anything
that is inparfit, certes, in thilke general ther
mot ben somthing that is parfit; for yif so
be that perfeccioun is don away, men may
nat thinkene seye fro whennes thilke thing
is that is cleped inparfit. for the nature
of thinges ne took nat hir beginninge of
thinges amenused and inparfit, but it pro-
cedeth of thinges that ben al hool & ab-
solut, and descendeth so down into outter-
est thinges, and into thinges empty and
withouten frut. But, as I have yshewed a
litel herbyform, that yif ther be a blisful-
nesse that be freele and veyn and inparfit,
ther may no man doute that ther nis som
blisfulnesse that is sad, stedefast, and
parfit. **Boece.** This is concluded, quod I,
fermely and sothfastly.

Philosophie.

AT considere also, quod she, in wham
this blisfulnesse enhabiteth. The
comune acordaunce and conceite of
the corages of men proeveth & graunteth,
that God, prince of alle thinges, is good.
for, so as nothing ne may ben thought
bette than God, it may nat ben doutet
thanne that he, that nothing nis bettre,
that he nis good. Certes, resoun sheweth
that God is so good, that it proveth by
verray force that parfit good is in him. for
yif God ne is swich, he ne may nat ben
prince of alle thinges; for certes somthing
possessing in itself parfit good, sholde
ben more worthy than God, and it sholde
semen that thilke thing were first, & eld-
er than God. for we han shewed apertly
that alle thinges that ben parfit ben first or
thinges that ben unparfit; and forthy, for
as moche as that my resoun or my proces
ne go nat away withoute an ende, we owen
to graunten that the soverain God is right
ful of soverain parfit good. And we han
establisshed that the soverain good is ver-
ray blisfulnesse: thanne mot it nedes be,
that verray blisfulnesse is set in soverain
God. **This** take I wel, quod I, ne this ne
may nat ben withseid in no manere.

AT I preye, quod she, see now how
thou mayst proeven, hoolly & with-
oute corrupcioun, this that I have
seyd, that the soverain God is right ful of
soverain good. In which manere? quod I.

WENEST thou aught, quod she,
that this prince of alle thinges
have ytake thilke soverain good
anywher out of himself, of which soverain
good men proveth that he is ful, right as
thou mightest thinken that God, that hath
blisfulnesse in himself, and thilke blisful-
nesse that is in him, weren dyvers in sub-
staunce? for yif thou wene that God have
received thilke good out of himself, thou
mayst wene that he that yaf thilke good to
God be more worthy than is God. But I
am biknownen and confesse, and that right
dignely, that God is right worthy aboven
alle thinges; and, yif so be that this good
be in him by nature, but that it is dyvers
fro him by weninge resoun, sin we speke
of God prince of alle thinges: feigne who/
so feigne may, who was he that hath con-
joined thise dyverse thinges togider? And
eek, at the laste, see wel that a thing that
is dyvers from any thing, that thilke thing
nis nat that same thing fro which it is un-
derstanden to ben dyvers. Channe folweth
it, that thilke thing that by his nature is
dyvers fro soverain good, that that thing
nis nat soverain good; but certes, that
were a felonous corsesnesse to thinken
that of him that nothing nis more worth.

for alwey, of alle thinges, the nature of hem ne may nat ben better than his biginning; for which I may concluden, by right verray resoun, that thilke that is biginning of alle thinges, thilke same thing is sovereign good in his substaunce. **Boece.** Thou hast seyd rightfully, quod I.

Philosophie.

BUT we han graunted, quod she, that the sovereign good is blisfulnesse. And that is sooth, quod I.

GIANNE, quod she, moten we nedes graunten and confessen that thilke same sovereign good be God. **Certes,** quod I, I ne may nat denyen ne withstonde the resouns purposed; and I see wel that it folweth by strengthe of the premisses.

LOKE now, quod she, yif this be proved yit more fermly thus: that ther ne mowen nat ben two sovereign goodes that ben dyverse amonge himself. For certes, the goodes that ben dyverse amonges himself, that oon nis nat that that other is; thanne ne may neither of hem ben parfit, so as either of hem lakket to other. But that that nis nat parfit, men may seen apertly that it nis nat sovereign. The thinges, thanne, that ben sovereignly goode, ne mowen by no wey ben dyverse. But I have wel concluded that blisfulnesse and God ben the sovereign good; for whiche it mot nedes ben, that sovereign blisfulnesse is sovereign divinitee. **Nothing,** quod I, nis more soothfast than this, ne more ferme by resoun; ne a more worthy thing than God may nat ben concluded.

ADON these thinges thanne, quod she, right as thise geometriens, whan they han shewed hir proposicions, ben wont to bringen in thinges that they clepen porismes, or declaraciouns of forside thinges, right so wole I yewe thee heer as a corollarie, or a mede of coroune, forwhy, for as moche as by the getinge of blisfulnesse men ben maked blisful, and blisfulnesse is divinitee: thanne is it manifest and open, that by the getinge of divinitee men ben maked blisful. Right as by the getinge of justice they ben maked just, & by the getinge of sapience they ben maked wyse: right so, nedes, by the semblable resoun, whan they han geten divinitee, they ben maked goddes. Thanne is every blisful man God; but certes, by nature, ther nis but o God; but, by the participacioun of divinitee, ther ne let ne desturbeth nothing that ther ne ben manye goddes. **This is,** quod I, a fair thing and a precious, clepe it as thou wolt; be it porisme or corollarie, or mede of coroune or declaringes.

CERTES, quod she, nothing nis fayrer than is the thing that by resoun sholde ben added to thise forside thinges. **What thing?** quod I. **S**o, quod she, as it semeth that blisfulnesse contenech many thinges, it were for to witen whether that alle these thinges maken or conjoynen as a maner body of blisfulnesse, by dyversitee any of parties or of membres; or elles, yif that acomplishe by himself the substance of blisfulnesse, so that alle these othere thinges ben referred and brought to blisfulnesse, that is to seyn, as to the cheef of hem. **I wolde,** quod I, that thou maseyst, & that thou recordedest me the forseyde thinges.

HAVE I nat juged, quod she, that blisfulnesse is good? **Yis,** forsothe, quod I; and that sovereign good.

ADDE thanne, quod she, thilke good, that is maked blisfulnesse, to alle these forside thinges; for thilke same blisfulnesse that is demed to ben sovereign suffisaunce, thilke selve is sovereign power, sovereign reverence, sovereign cleanness or noblesse, and sovereign delyt. **Conclusio.** What seyst thou thanne of alle these thinges, that is to seyn, suffisaunce, power, and these othere thinges; ben they thanne as membres of blisfulnesse, or ben they referred and brought to sovereign good, right as alle thinges that ben brought to the chief of hem? **I understonde wel;** quod I, what thou purposest to seke; but I desire for to herkne that thou shewe it me.

THK now thus the discrecioun of this questioun, quod she. Yif alle these thinges, quod she, weren membres to felicitye, than weren they dyverse that oon from that other; and swich is the nature of parties or of membres, that dyverse membres compounen a body. **Certes,** quod I, it hath wel ben shewed heer bifore, that alle these thinges ben alle o thing.

GIANNE ben they none membres, quod she; for elles it sholde seme that blisfulnesse were conjoyned al of on membre allone; but that is a thing that may nat be don. **This thing,** quod I, nis nat doutous; but I abyde to herknen the remnaunt of thy questioun.

THIS is open and cleer, quod she, that alle othere thinges ben referred & brought to good, for therefore is suffisaunce required, for it is demed to ben good; and forthy is power required, for men trowen also that it be good; & this same thing mowen we thinken & conjecten of reverence, and of noblesse, and of delyt.

Thanne is sovereign good the somme and the cause of al that aughte ben desired; forwhy thilke thing that withholdeth no good in itself, ne semblaunce of good, it ne may nat wel in no manere be desired ne required. And the contrarie: for thogh that thinges by hir nature ne ben nat goode, althegates, yif men wene that ben goode, yit ben they desired as thogh that they weren verrayliche goode. And therfor is it that men oughten to wene by right, that bountee be the sovereign fyn, and the cause of alle the thinges that ben to requeren. But certes, thilke that is cause for which men requeren any thing, it semeth that thilke same thing be most desired. As thus: yif that a wight wolde ryden for cause of hele, he ne desired nat so moche the moevinge to ryden, as the effect of his hele. Now thanne, sin that alle thinges ben required for the grace of good, they ne ben nat desired of alle folk more thanne the same good. But we han graunted that blisfulnesse is that thing, for whiche that alle these othere thinges ben desired; thanne is it thus: that, certes, only blisfulnesse is required and desired. By whiche thing it sheweth cleerly, that of good and of blisfulnesse is al oon & the same substaunce. **I see nat,** quod I, wherfore that men mighten discorden in this.

AND we han shewed that God & verray blisfulnesse is al oon thing. **That is sooth,** quod I.

GIANNE mowen we conclude sikelly, that the substaunce of God is set in thilke same good, and in non other place.

Metre X.

Huc omnes pariter venite capti.

COMETH ALLE togider now, ye that ben yeaught and ybounde with wikkede cheynes, by the deceivable delyt of erthely thinges enhabitinge in your thought! Heer shal ben the reste of your labours, heer is the havene stable in peysible quiete; this allone is the open refut to wrecches. **Glosa.** This is to seyn, that ye that ben combered and deceived with worldly affectiouns, cometh now to this sovereign good, that is God, that is refut to hem that wolen comen to him. **Textus.** Alle the thinges that the river Tagus yeveth yow with his goldene gravailles, or elles alle the thinges that the river Hernus yeveth with his rede brinke, or that Indus yeveth, that is next the hote party of the world, that medleth the grene stones with the whyte, ne sholde nat cleeren the lookinge of your thought, but hyden rather your blinde corages with

in hir derknesse. Al that lyketh yow heer, and excyteth & moeveth your thoughtes, the erthe hath norissed it in hise lowe caves. But the shyninge, by whiche the hevene is governed and whennes he hath his strengthe, that eschuethe the derke overthrowinge of the sowle; and whoso may knowen thilke light of blisfulnesse, he shal wel seyn, that the whyte bemes of the sonne ne ben nat cleer.

Prose XI.

Assentior, inquam.

Boece.

ASSENTE ME, quod I; for alle these thinges ben strongly bounden with right ferme resouns. **Philosophie.** How moche wilt thou preysen it, quod she, yif that thou knowe what thilke good is?

I wol preysen it, quod I, by prys withouten ende, yif it shal bityde me to knowe also togider God that is good.

CERTES, quod she, that shal I do thee by verray resoun, yif that thou thinges that I have concluded a litel herbifore dwellen only in hir first graunting. They dwellen graunted to thee, quod I; this is to seyn, as who seith: I graunte thy forside conclusiouns.

HAVE I nat shewed thee, quod she, that the thinges that ben required of many folkes ne ben nat verray goodes ne parfite, for they ben dyverse that oon fro that othere; and so as ech of hem is lakkinge to other, they ne han no power to bringen a good that is ful and absolut? But thanne at erst ben they verray good, whanne they ben gadered togider alle into o forme & into oon wirkinge, so that thilke thing that is suffisaunce, thilke same be power, and reverence, and noblesse, and mirthe; and forsothe, but yif alle these thinges ben alle oon same thing, they ne han nat wherby that they mowen ben put in the number of thinges that oughten ben required or desired. **It is shewed,** quod I; ne herof may ther no man douten.

THES thinges thanne, quod she, that ne ben no goodes whanne they ben dyverse, & whan they biginnen to ben alle oon thing thanne ben they goodes, ne comth it hem nat thanne by the getinge of unitee, that they ben maked goodes? **So it semeth,** quod I.

BUT al thing that is good, quod she, grauntest thou that it be good by the participacioun of good or no? **I graunte it,** quod I.

THANNE most thou graunten, quod she, by semblable resoun, that oon and good be oo same thing. for of thinges, of whiche that the effect nis nat naturelly diverse, nedes the substance mot be oo same thing. *I* ne may nat denye that, quod I.

AST thou nat knowen wel, quod she, that al thing that is hath so longe his dwellinge & his substaunce as longe as it is oon; but whan it forleteth to ben oon, it mot nedes dyen and corumpe togider. *In which manere?* quod I.

RIGHT as in bestes, quod she, whan the sowle and the body ben conjoined in oon and dwellen togider, it is cleped a beest. And whan hir unitee is destroyed by the disseverance of that oon from that other, than sheweth it wel that it is aded thing, & that it is no longer no beest. And the body of a wight, whyl it dwelleth in oo forme by conjuncion of membres, it is wel seyn that it is a figure of mankinde. And yif the parties of the body ben so devyded and dissevered, that oon fro that other, that they destroyen unitee, the body forleteth to ben that it was biforn. And, whoso wolde renne in the same manere by alle thinges, he sholde seen that, withoute doute, every thing is in his substaunce as longe as it is oon; and whan it forleteth to ben oon, it dyeth and perisshe. *Whan I considere, quod I, manye thinges, I see non other.*

IS ther anything thanne, quod she, that, in as moche as it liveth naturelly, that forleteth the talent or appetyt of his beinge, and desireth to come to deeth and to corrupcion? *Yif I considere, quod I, the beestes that han any maner nature of wilninge and of nillinge, I finde no beest, but yif it be constreined fro withoute forth, that forleteth or despyseth the entencion to liven and to duren, or that wole, his thankes, hasten him to dyen. for every beest travaileth him to deffende and kepe the savacioun of his lyf, and eschueth deeth and destruccoun. But certes, I doute me of herbes and of trees, that is to seyn, that I am in a doute of swiche thinges as herbes or trees, that ne han no felinge sowles, ne no naturel wirkinges servinge to appetytes as bestes han, whether they han appetyt to dwellen and to duren.*

CERTES, quod she, ne therof thar the nat doute. Now loke upon thise herbes and thise trees; they wexen first in swiche places as ben covenable to hem, in whiche places they ne mowen nat sone dyen ne dryen, as longe as hir nature may deffenden hem. forsom of hem waxen in feeldes, and som in mountaignes, and

othre waxen in mareys, and othre cleven on roches, and somme waxen plentivous in sondes; & yif that any wight enforce him to beren hem into othre places, they wexen drye. for nature yeveth to every thing that is convenient to him, and travaileth that they ne dye nat, as longe as they han power to dwellen & to liven. *What woltow seyn of this, that they drawen alle hir norissinges by hir rotes, right as they hadden hir mouthes yplounged within the erthes, and sheden by hir maryes hir wode and hir bark?* And what woltow seyn of this, that thilke thing that is right softe, as the marye is, that is alwey hid in the sete, al withinne, and that is defended fro withoute by the stedfastnesse of wode? and that the uttereste bark is put ayens the destemperaunce of the hevenc, as a defendour mighty to suffren harm? And thus, certes, maystow wel seen how great is the diligenche of nature; for alle thinges renovelen and puplisshen hem with seed ymultiplied; ne ther nis no man that ne wot wel that they ne ben right as a foundement and edifice, for to duren nat only for a tyme, but right as for to duren perdurably by generacioun. And the thinges oth that men wenen ne haven none sowles, ne desire they nat ech of hem by semblable resoun to kepen that is hir, that is to seyn, that is acorde to hir nature in conservacioun of hir beinge & endurynge; for wher for elles bereth lightnesse the flambes up, and the weighte presseth the erthe adoun, but for as moche as thilke places and thilke moevinges ben covenable to everich of hem? And forsothe every thing kepeth thilke that is acorde & propre to him, right as thinges that ben contraries and enemys corompen hem. And yif the harde thinges, as stones, clyven & holden hir parties togider right faste and harde, and deffenden hem in withstandinge that they ne departe nat lightly atwinne. And the thinges that ben softe and fletynge, as is water and eyr, they departen lightly, and yeven place to hem that breken or devyden hem; but natheles, they retornen some ayein into the same thinges fro whennes they ben arraced. But fyr fleeth & refuseth al devisioun. Ne I ne trete nat heer now of wilful moevinges of the sowle that is knowinge, but of the naturel entencion of thinges, as thus: right as we swolwe the mete that we receiven and ne thinke nat on it, and as we drawen our breeth in slepinge that we wite it nat whyle we slepen. For certes, in the beestes, the love of hir livinges ne of hir beinges ne comth nat of the wilninges of the sowle, but of the bigynninges of nature. for certes, thorough constreynge causes, wil desireth & embrac-

eth ful ofte tyme the deeth that nature dredeth; that is to seyn as thus: that a man may ben constreyned so, by som cause, that his wil desireth and taketh the deeth which that nature hateth & dredeth ful sore. And somtyme we seeth the contrarye, as thus: that the wil of a wight desireth & constreyneth that that nature storbeth & requereth alwey, that is to seyn, the werk of generacioun, by the whiche the generacioun only dwelleth and is sustened the long durablete of mortal thinges.

AND thus this charitee and this love, that every thing hath to himself, ne comth nat of the moevinge of the sowle, but of the entencion of nature. for the purvaunce of God hath yeven to thinges that ben creat of him this, that is a ful gret cause to liven and to duren; for which they desiren naturelly hir lyf as longe as ever they mowen. For which thou mayst nat drete, by no manere, that alle the thinges that ben anywhere, that they ne requeren naturelly the ferme stablesse of perdurable dwellinge, and eek the eschuinge of destruccoun. *Boece.* Now confesse I wel, quod I, that I see now wel certainly, withoute doutes, the thinges that whylom semeden uncertain to me.

ACC, quod she, thilke thing that desireth to be and to dwellen perdurably, he desireth to ben oon; for yif that that oon were destroyed, certes, beinge ne shulde ther non dwellen to no wight. *That is sooth, quod I.* *Thanne, quod she, desiren alle thinges oon?* *I as sente, quod I.* And I have shewed, quod she, that thilke same oon is thilke that is good. *Ye, for sothe, quod I.*

ALL E thinges thanne, quod she, requeren good; & thilke good thanne mayst thou descryven right thus: good is thilke thing that every wight desireth.

THER ne may be thought, quod I, no more verray thing. for either alle thinges ben referred & brought to nought, & floteren withoute governour, despoiled of oon as of hir propre heved; or elles, yif ther be any thing to which that alle thinges tenden and hyen, that thing moste ben the sovereing good of alle goodes.

THANNE seyde she thus: O my nory, quod she, I have gret gladnesse of thee; for thou hast ficched in thyn herte the middel soothfastnesse, that is to seyn, the prikke; but this thing hath ben discovered to thee, in that thou seydest that thou wistest nat a litel herbiform. *What was that?* quod I.

WHAT thoune wistest nat, quod she, which was the ende of thinges; and certes, that is the thing that every

wight desireth; and for as mochel as we han gadered and comprehended that good is thilke thing that is desired of alle, thanne moten we nedes confessen, that good is the fyn of alle thinges.

Metre XI.

Quisquis profunda mente vestigat verum.

WHOSO that seketh sooth by a deep thought, and coveiteth nat to ben deceived by no misweyes, lat him rollen and trenden withinne himself the light of his inward sighte; & lat him gadere ayein, enclynge into a compass, the longe moevinges of his thoughtes; and lat him techen his corage that he hath enclosed and hid in his tresors, al that he compasseth or seketh fro withoute. And thanne thilke thinge, that the blake cloude of errour whylom hadde ycovered, shal lighten more cleerly thanne Phebus himself ne shyneth.

Glosa.

WHOSO WOLE seken the deep grounde of sooth in his thought, and wol nat be deceived by false proposicions that goon amis fro the trouthe, lat him wel examine and rolle withinne himself the nature and the propretees of the thing; and lat him yit eftsones examine and rollen his thoughtes by good deliberacioun, or that he deme; and lat him techen his sowle that it hath, by natural principles kindeliche yhid within itself, alle the trouthe the whiche he imagineth to ben in thinges withoute. And thanne alle the derknesse of his misknowinge shal seme more evidently to sighte of his understandinge thanne the sonne ne semeth to sighte withoute forth.

OR certes the body, bringinge the weighte of foryetinge, ne hath nat chased out of your thoughte al the cleernesse of your knowinge; for certainly the seed of sooth haldeth & clyveth within your corage, and it is awaked and excyted by the winde & by the blastes of doctrine. for wherfor elles demen ye of your owne wil the rightes, whan ye ben axed, but yif go were that the norissinge of resoun ne livede yplounged in the depthe of your herte? this is to seyn, how sholden men demen the sooth of any thing that were axed, yif ther nere a rote of soothfastnesse that were yplounged & hid in naturel principles, the whiche soothfastnesse lived within the deepnesse of the thought. And yif so be that the Muse and the doctrine of Plato singeth sooth, al that every wight lerneth, he ne doth nothing elles thanne but recordeth, as men recorden thinges that ben foryeten.

THANNE seide I thus: I acorde me gretly to Plato, for thou remembrest & recorderest me thise thinges yit the secounde tyme; that is to seyn, first whan I loste my memorie by the contagious conjuncoun of the body with the sowle; & eftsones afterward, whan I loste it, confounded by the charge and by the burdene of my sorwe.

AND thanne seide she thus: yif thou loke, quod she, first the thinges that thou hast graunted, it ne shal nat ben right fer that thou ne shalt remembre thilke thing that thou seydest that thou nistest nat. What thing? quod I. By whiche government, quod she, that this world is governed. Me remembreth it wel, quod I; and I confesse wel that I ne wiste it naught. But albeit so that I see now from afer what thou purposest, algates, I desire yit to herkene it of thee more pleyntly. Thou ne wendest nat, quod she, a litel herbiform, that men sholden doute that this world nis governed by God.

CERTES, quod I, ne yit ne doute I if naught, ne Inel never wene that it were to doute; as who seith, but I wot wel that God governeth this world; & I shal shortly answeren thee by what resouns I am brought to this. This world, quod I, of so manye dyverse & contrarious parties, ne mighte never han ben assembled in o forme, but yif ther nere oon that conjoynede so manye dyverse thinges; and the same dyversitee of hir natures, that so discorden that oon fro that other, moste departen and unjoynen the thinges that ben conjoyned, yif ther ne were oon that contenede that he hath conjoined and ybounde. Ne the certein ordre of nature ne sholde nat bringe forth so ordenee moevinges, by places, by tymes, by doinges, by spaces, by qualitees, yif ther ne were oon that were ay stedefast dwellinge, that ordeynede and disponede thise dyversitees of moevinges. And thilke thing, whatsoever it be, by which that alle thinges ben ymaked and ylad, I clepe him God; that is a word that is used to alle folk.

THANNE seyde she: sin thou felest thus thise thinges, quod she, I trowe that I have litel more to done that thou, mighty of welefulnesse, hool and sounde, ne see eftsones thy contree. But lat us loken the thinges that we han purposed herbiform. Have I nat noumbred and

seyd, quod she, that suffisaunce is in blisfulnesse, and we han acorded that God is thilke same blisfulnesse? Yis, forsothe, quod I. And that, to governe this world, help fro withoute? for elles, yif he hadde nede of any help, he ne sholde nat have no ful suffisaunce? Yis, thus it mot nedes self alone alle thinges? quod she. That may nat be denyed, quod I. And I have shewed that God is the same good? It remembreth me wel, quod I.

THANNE ordeineth he alle thinges by thilke good, quod she; sin he, good, governeth alle thinges by himself; and he is as a keye & a stere by which that the edifice of this world is ykept stable & withoute coroumpinge.

ACORDE me gretly, quod I; and I aperceivde a litel herbiform that thou woldest seye thus; albeit so that it were by a thinne suspicioun.

TROWE it wel, quod she; for, as I trowe, thou ledest now more entengoodes. But natheles the thing that I shal telle thee yit ne sheweth nat lasse to loken. What is that? quod I.

SO as men trowen, quod she, and that rightfully, that God governeth alle thinges by the keye of his goodnesse, & alle thise same thinges, as I have taught thee, hasten hem by naturel entencoun to comen to good: ther may no man doute that they ne be governed voluntarily, and that they ne converten hem of hir owne wil to the wil of hir ordenour; as they that ben acordinge and enclynynge to hir governour and hir king. It mot nedes be so, quod I; for thereaume ne sholde nat semen blisful yif ther were a yok of misdrawinges in dyverse parties; ne the savinge of obedient thinges ne sholde nat be.

THANNE is ther nothing, quod she, that kepeth his nature, that enforceeth him to goon ayein God? No, quod I. **A**ND yif that anything enforcede him to withstonde God, mighte it availen at the laste ayeins him, that we han graunted to ben almighty by the right of blisfulnesse? Certes, quod I, aloutrely it ne mighte nat availen him. Thanne is ther nothing, quod she, that either wole or may withstonden to this sovereign good? I trowe nat, quod I. Thanne is thilke the sovereign good, quod she, that alle thinges governeth strongly, and ordeyneth hem softly.

THANNE seyde I thus: I delyte me, quod I, nat only in the endes or in the somme of the resouns that thou hast

concluded and proeved, but thilke wordes that thou usest delyten me moche more; so, at the laste, foolles that sumtyme renegrete thinges oughten ben ashamed of hemself; that is to seyn, that we foolles that reprehenden wikkedly the thinges that touchen Goddes governaunce, we oughten ben ashamed of ourself: as I, that seyde that Godrefuseth only the werkis of men, and ne entremeteth nat of hem.

HOU hast wel herd, quod she, the fables of the poetes, how the giants assailed the hevene with the goddes; but forsothe, the debonair force of God deposede hem, as it was worthy; that is to seyn, destroyed the giants, as it was worthy. But wilt thou that we joynen togider thilke same resouns? Forpraventure, of swich conjuncoun may sterten up som fair sparkle of sooth.

DO, quod I, as thee liste. Weneest thou, quod she, that God ne be almighty? No, quod I, no man is in doute of it. Certes, quod I, no might ne douteth it, yif he be in his minde. Buthe, quod she, that is almighty, ther nis nothing that he ne may. That is sooth, quod I. May God don yvel? quod she. Nay, forsothe, quod I. Thanne is yvel nothing, quod she, sin that he ne may nat don yvel that may don alle thinges.

CORNEST thou me? quod I; or elles pleyest thou or deceivest thou me, that hast so woven me with thy resouns the hous of Dedalus, so entre-laced that it is unable to be unlaced; thou that otherwhyle entrest ther thou issest, and otherwhyle issest ther thou entrest, ne foldest thou nat togider, by replicacioun of wordes, a maner wonderful cerce or environinge of the simplicitee devyne? For certes, a litel herbiform, whan thou bigunne at blisfulnesse, thou seydest that it is sovereign good; and seydest that it is set in sovereign God; and seydest that God himself is sovereign good; and that God is the fulle blisfulnesse; for which thou yave me as a covenable yift, that is to seyn, that no might nis blisful but yif he be God also therwith. And seidest eek, that the forme of good is the substaunce of God and of blisfulnesse; & seidest, that thilke same oon is thilke same good, that is required & desired of alle the kinde of thinges. And thou proevedest, in disputinge, that God governeth alle the thinges of the world by the governements of bountee, and seydest, that alle thinges wolen obeyen to him; and seydest, that the nature of yvel nis nothing. And thise thinges ne shewedest thou nat with none resouns ytaken fro withoute, but by proeves in cerces & hoomlich knowen; the whiche proeves drawn to hemself hir feith and hir acord, everich of

hem of other.

THANNE seyde she thus: I ne scorne thee nat, ne pleye, ne deceive thee; but I have shewed thee the thing that is grettest over alle thinges by the yift of God, that we whylom preyeden. For this is the forme of the devyne substaunce, that is swich that it ne slydeth nat into outterest foreine thinges, ne ne receiveth no straunge thinges in him; but right as Parmenides seyde in Greek of thilke devyne substaunce; he seyde thus: that Thilke devyne substaunce torneth the world and the moevable cerce of thinges, whyl thilke devyne substaunce kepeth itself withoute moevinge; that is to seyn, that it ne moeveth nevermo, and yit it moeveth alle othere thinges. But natheles, yif I have stired resouns that ne ben nat taken fro withoute the compas of thing of which we treten, but resouns that ben bistowed within that compas, ther nis nat why that thou sholdest merveil; sin thou hast lerned by the sentence of Plato, that Nedes the wordes moten be cosines to the thinges of which they spoken.

Metre XII.
felix, qui potuit boni.

BLISFUL is that man that may seen the clere welle of good; blisful is he that may unbinden him fro the bondes of the hevy erthe. The poete of Trace, Orpheus, that whylom hadde right greet sorwe for the deeth of his wyf, after that he hadde maked, by his weeply songes, the wodes, moevable, to rennen; and hadde maked the riveres to stonden stille; & hadde maked the hertes and the hundes to joynen, dredeles, hir sydes to cruel lyouns, for to herkennen his songe; & hadde maked that the hare was nat agast of the hounde, which that was plesed by his songe: so, whan the mooste ardaunt love of his wif brende the entrailes of his brest, ne the songes that hadden overcomen alle thinges ne mighten nat aswagen hir lord Orpheus, he pleyede him of the hevene goddes that weren cruel to him; he went him to the houses of helle. And there he temprede hise blaundisshinge songes by resowninge strenges, and spak and song in wepinge al that ever he hadde received and laved out of the noble welles of his moder Calliope the goddesse; and he song with as moche as he mighte of wepinge, and with as moche as love, that doubled his sorwe, mighte yeve him and techen him; and he commoevede the helle, & requerede & bisoughte by swete preyere the lordes of sowles in helle, of relesinge; that is to seyn, to yilden him his wyf.

CERBERUS, the porter of helle, with his three hevedes, was caught and al abayst for the newe song; and the three goddesses, furies, and vengeresses of felonies, that tormenten and agasten the sowles by anoy, woxen sorwful and sory, & wepen teres for pitee. Thone was nat the heved of Ixion ytormented by the overthrowinge wheel; and Tantalus, that was destroyed by the woodnesse of longe thurst, despyseth the flodes to drinke; the fowl that highte voltor, that eteth the stomak or the giser of Cytus, is so fulfild of his song that it nil eten ne tyren no more. At the laste the lord and juge of sowles was moeved to misericordes and cryde, We ben overcomen, quod he; yive we to Orpheus his wyf to bere him compaigne; he hath wel ybought hir by his song and his ditee; but we wol putte a lawe in this, and covenaut in the yifte: that is to seyn, that, til he be out of helle, yif he loke behinde him, that his wyf shal comen

ayein unto us.

What is he that may yive a lawe to lovers? Love is a gretter lawe and a stronger to himself than any lawe and that men may yeven. Alas! when Orpheus of the night, that is to seyn, at the termes boundes of helle, Orpheus lokede abakward on Eurydice his wyf, and loste hir, and was deed.

THIS fable aperteineth to yow alle, whosoever desireth or seketh to lede his thought into the sovereyn day, that is to seyn, the cleernesse of sovereyn good, for whoso that ever besoven comen that he ficche his eyen into the putte of helle, that is to seyn, whoso sette his thoughtes in erthely thinges, al that ever he hath drawn of the noble good celestial, he leseth it when he loketh the helles, that is to seyn, into lowe thinges of the erthe.

Explicit Liber tercius.

DE CONSOLACIONE PHILOSOPHIE. BOOK IV. PROSE I.

Hec cum Philosophia, dignitate vultus.

ANNE PHILOSOPHY hadde songen softly and delitably the forseide thinges, kepinge the dignitee of hir chere and the weighte of hir wordes. I thanne, that ne hadde nat alouterly foryeten the wepinge and the mourninge that was set in myn herte, for brak the entencion of hir that entendede yit to seyn some othere thinges. O, quod I, thou that art gyderesse of verrey light; the thinges that thou hast seid me hiderto ben so clere to me and so shewing by the devyne lookinge of hem, & by thy resouns, that they ne mowen ben overcomen. And thilke thinges that thou toldest me, albeit so that I hadde whylom foryeten hem, for the sorwe of the wrong that hath ben don to me, yit natheles they ne weren nat alouterly unknownen to me. But this same is, namely, a right greet cause of my sorwe, so as the governour of thinges is good, yif that yveles mowen ben by any weyes; or elles yif that yveles passen withoute punisshinge. The whiche thing only, how worthy it is to ben wondred upon, thou considerest it wel thyself certeinly. But yit to this thing ther is yit another thing yjoigned, more to ben wondred upon, for felonye is emperesse, and floureth ful of riches; and vertu nis nat alonly withoute medes, but it is cast under & fortroden under the feet of felon-

ous folk; and it abyeth the torments in stede of wikkede felounes. Of alle whiche thinges ther nis no wight that may merveylen ynough, ne compleine, that swiche thinges ben doon in the regne of God, that alle thinges woot & alle thinges may, and ne wole nat but only gode thinges.

Quod she, that were a greet merveyle, & an embasshinge withouten ende, and wel more horrible than alle monstres, yif it were as thou wenest; that is to seyn, that in the right ordene hous of so mochel a fader & an ordenour of meynes, that the vessels that ben foule and vyle sholden ben honoured and heried, and the precious vessels sholden ben defouled & vyle; but it nis nat so. for yif the thinges that I have concluded a litel herbifom ben kept hole & unraced, thou shalt wel knowe by the autoritee of God, of the whos regne I speke, that certes the gode folk ben alwey mighty, and shrewes ben alwey outcast and feble; ne the vyces ne ben nevermo withoute peyne, ne the vertues ne ben nat withoute mede; & that blisfulneses comen alwey to gode folk, and infortune comth alwey to wikked folk. And thou shalt wel knowe many thinges of this kinde, that shollen cesen thy pleintes, and strengthen thee with stedefast sadnesse. And for thou hast seyn the forme of the verray blisfulnesse by me, that have whylom shewed it thee, and thou hast knownen in whom blisfulnesse is yset, alle thinges ytreted that I trowe ben necessarie to putten forth, I shal shewe thee the wey that

shal bringen thee ayein unto thyn hous. And I shal ficchen fetheres in thy thought, by whiche it may rysen in heighte, so that, alle tribulacioun ydon awey, thou, by my gydinge and by my path & by my sledes, shalt mowe retorne hool and sound into thy contree.

Metre I.

Sunt etenim pennae volucres mihi.

IHAVE, forsothe, swifte fetheres that surmounten the heighte of hevne. When the swifte thought hath clothed itself in the fetheres, it despyseth the roundnesse of the grete ayr; and it seeth the cloudes behinde his bak; and passeth the heighte of the region of the fyr, that eschaufeth by the swifte moevinge of the firmament, til that he aryseth him into the houses that beren the sterres, & joyneth his weyes with the sonne Phebus, and felawshipeth the wey of the olde colde Saturnus; & he ymaked a knight of the clere sterre; that is to seyn, that the thought is maked Goddes knight by the sekinge of trouthe to comen to the verray knowleche of God. And thilke thought renneth by the cercle of the sterres, in alle places theras the shyninge night is peined; that is to seyn, the night that is cloudeles; for on nightes that ben cloudeles it semeth as the hevne were peined with dyverse images of sterres. And whanne he hath ydoon ther ynough, he shal forleten the laste hevne, and he shal pressen & wenden on the bak of the swifte firmament, and he shal ben maked parfit of the worshipful light of God. Ther halt the lord of kinges the ceptre of his might, and atempreth the governements of the world, and the shyninge juge of thinges, stable in himself, governeth the swifte cart or wayn, that is to seyn, the circular moevinge of the sonne. And yif thy wey ledeth thee ayein so that thou be brought thider, thanne wolt thou seye now that that is the contree that thou requerest, of which thou ne haddest no minde: But now it remembreth me wel, heer was I born, heer wol I fastne my degree, heer wole I dwelle. But yif thee lyketh thanne to loken on the derkenesse of the erthe that thou hast forleten, thanne shalt thou seen that thise felonous tyraunts, that the wrecchede peple dredeth, now shollen ben exyled fro thilke fayre contree.

Prose II.
Cum ego, Papae, inquam.

ANNE seyde I thus: Ow! I wondre me that thou bihestest me so grete thinges; ne I nedoutenat that thou ne mayst wel performe that thou bihestest. But I preye thee only this, that thou ne tarye nat to telle me thilke thinges that thou hast moeved.

FIRST, quod she, thou most nedes knowen, that goode folk ben alwey stronge & mighty, & the shrewes ben feble and desert and naked of alle strengthes. And of thise thinges, certes, everich of hem is declared and shewed by other. for so as good and yvel ben two contraries, yif so be that good be stedefast, than sheweth the feblesse of yvel al openly; & yif thou knowe clearly the frelesse of yvel, the stedefastnesse of good is knowen. But for as moche as the fey of my sentence shal be the more ferme and haboundaunt, I will gon by that oo wey and by that other; and I wole conferme the thinges that ben purposed, now on this syde and now on that syde. Two thinges ther ben in whiche the effect of alle the dedes of mankinde standeth, that is to seyn, wil and power; and yif that oon of thise two fayleth, ther nis nothing that may be don. for yif that wil lakketh, ther nis no wight that undertaketh to don that he wol nat don; and yif power fayleth, the wil nis but in ydel and stant for naught. And therof cometh it, that yif thou see a wight that wolde geten that he may nat geten, thou mayst nat douten that power ne fayleth him to haven that he wolde. This is open and cleer, quod I; ne it may nat ben denyed in no manere. And yif thou see a wight, quod she, that hath doon that he wolde doon, thou nilt nat douten that he ne hath had power to don it? No, quod I. And in that that every wight may, in that men may holden him mighty; as who seyth, in so moche as man is mighty to don a thing, in so moche men halt him mighty; and in that that he ne may, in that men demen him to be feble. I confesse it wel, quod I. Remembreth thee, quod she, that I have gadered & shewed by forseide resouns that al the entencion of the wil of mankinde, which that is lad by dyverse studies, hasteth to comen to blisfulnesse. It remembreth me wel, quod I, that it hath ben shewed. And recordeth thee nat thanne, quod she, that blisfulnesse is thilke same good that men requeren; so

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that, whan that blisfulnesse is requered of alle, that good also is requered and desired of alle? It ne recordeth me nat, quod I; for I have it gretly alwey ficched in my memorie. Alle folk thanne, quod she, goode and eek badde, enforcen hem withoute difference of entencion to comen to good? This is a verray consequence, quod I. And certein is, quod she, that by the getinge of good ben men ymaked goode? This is certein, quod I. Channe geten goode men that they desiren? So semeth it, quod I. But wikkede folk, quod she, yif they geten the good that they desiren, they ne mowe nat be wikkede? So is it, quod I.

THANNE, so as that oon and that other, quod she, desiren good; and the goode folk geten good, & nat the wikke folk; thanne nis it no doute that the goode folk ne ben mighty & the wikkede folk ben feble? Whoso that ever, quod I, douteth of this, he ne may nat considere the nature of thinges ne the consequence of resouns.

AND over this, quod she, yif that ther be two thinges that han oo same purpose by kinde, and that oon of hem pursueth & parformeth thilke same thing by naturel office, and that other ne may nat doon thilke naturel office, but folweth, by other manere thanne is convenable to nature, him that accomplissheth his purpos kindly, and yit hene accomplissheth nat his owne purpos: whether of these two demestow for more mighty? Yif that I conjecte, quod I, that thou wolt seye, algates yit I desire to herkne it more pleynly of thee. Thou wilt nat thanne deneye, quod she, that the moevement of goinge nis in men by kinde? No, forsothe, quod I. Ne thou nedoutest nat, quod she, that thilke naturel office of goinge ne be the office of feet? I ne doute it nat, quod I.

THANNE, quod she, yif that a wight be mighty to moeve and goth upon his feet, and another, to whom thilke naturel office of feet laketh, enforeceth him to gon crepinge upon his handes: whiche of these two oughte to ben holden the more mighty by right?

KNIT forth the remenaunt, quod I; for no wight ne douteth that he that may gon by naturel office of feet ne be more mighty than he that ne may nat.

BUT the sovereign good, quod she, that is eveneliche purposed to the gode folk & to badde, the gode folk seken it by naturel office of vertues, & the shrewes enforcen hem to geten it by dyverse coveityse of erthely thinges, which that nis no naturel office to geten thilke same sovereign good. Trowestow that it be any other

wyse?

NAY, quod I; for the consequence is open and shewing of thinges that I have graunted; that nedes gode folk moten ben mighty, and shrewes feble and unmighty.

THOU rennest aright biforn me, quod she, and this is the jugement; that is to seyn, I juge of thee right as thise leches ben wont to hopen of syke folk, whan they aperceyven that nature is redressed and withstondeth to the maladye. But, for I see thee now al redy to the understondinge, I shal shewe thee more thikke & continuel resouns. For loke now how gretly sheweth the feblesse and infirmitie of wikkede folk, that ne mowen nat comen to that hir naturel entencion ledeth hem, and yit almost thilke naturel entencion constrineth hem. And what were to demen thanne of shrewes, yif thilke naturel help hadde forleten hem, the which naturel help of intencion goth away biforn hem, and is so greet that unnethe it may ben overcome? Consider thanne how greet defaute of power and how greet feblesse ther is in wikkede felonous folk; as who seyth, the gretter thing that is coveited and the desire nat accomplisshed, of the lasse might is he that coveiteth it and may nat accomplisshen. And forthy Philosophie seyth thus by sovereign good: Ne shrewes ne requeren nat lighte medes ne veyne games, whiche they ne may folwenne holden; but they failen of thilke somme and of the heighte of thinges, that is to seyn, sovereign good; ne thise wrecches ne comen nat to the effect of sovereign good, the which they enforcen hem only to geten, by nightes and by dayes; in the getinge of which good the strengthe of good folk is ful wel ysene. For right so as thou mightest demen him mighty of goinge, that gooth on his feet til he mighte come to thilke place, fro the whiche place ther ne laye no wey forther to ben gon; right so most thou nedes demen him for right mighty, that geteth & ateyneth to the ende of alle thinges that ben to desire, byonde the whiche ende ther nis nothing to desire. Of the which power of good folk men may conclude, that the wikked men semen to be bareine & naked of alle strengthe. For why forleten they vertues & folwen vyces? Nis it nat for that they ne knowen nat the goodes? But what thing is more feble and more caitif thanne is the blindnesse of ignorance? Or elles they knowen ful wel whiche thinges that they oughten folwe, but lecherye and coveityse overthroweth hem mistorned; and certes, so doth distemperance to feble men, that ne mowen nat wrastlen ayeins the vyces. Ne knowen

they nat thanne wel that they forleten the good wilfully, and tornen hem wilfully to vyces? And in this wyse they ne forleten nat only to ben mighty, but they forleten aloutrely in any wyse for to ben. For they that forleten the comune fyn of alle thinges that ben, they forleten also therewithal for to ben.

AND peraventure it sholde semen to som folk that this were a mervelle to seyn: that shrewes, whiche that comen them more partye of men, ne ben nat ne han no beinge; but natheles, it is so, & thus stant this thing, for they that ben shrewes; es, I deneye nat that they ben shrewes; but I deneye, and seye simply & pleynly, that they ne ben nat, ne han no beinge. For right as thou mightest seyn of the carayne of a man, that it were a deed man, but thou ne mightest nat simply callen it a man; so graunte I wel forsothe, that vicious folk ben wikked, but I ne may nat graunte absolutly and simply that they ben. For thilke thing that withholdeth ordre and kepeth nature, thilke thing is and hath beinge; but what thing that faileth of that, that is to seyn, that he forleteth naturel ordre, he forleteth thilke thing that is set in his nature. But thou wolt seyn, that shrewes mowen. Certes, that ne deneye I nat; but certes, hir power ne descendeth nat of strengthe, but of feblesse. For they mowen don wikkednesses; the whiche they ne mighte nat don, yif they mighten dwellen in the forme & in the doinge of good folk. And thilke power sheweth ful evidently that they ne mowen right naught, for so as I have gadered & prooved a litel herbiforn, that yvel is naught; and so as shrewes mowen only but shrewednesses, this conclusioun is al cleer, that shrewes ne mowen right naught, ne han no power. And for as moche as thou understonde which is the strengthe of this power of shrewes, I have definisshed a litel herbiforn, that nothing is so mighty as sovereign good. That is sooth, quod I. And thilke same sovereign good may don non yvel? Certes, no, quod I. Is ther any wight thanne, quod she, that weneth that men mowen doon alle thinges? No man, quod I, but yif he be out of his witte. But, certes, shrewes mowen don yvel, quod she. Ye, wolde God, quod I, that they mighten don non!

THANNE, quod she, so as he that is mighty to doon only but goode thinges may don alle thinges; and they that ben mighty to don yvele thinges ne mowen nat alle thinges: thanne is it open thing and manifest, that they that mowen don yvel ben of lasse power. And yit, to prove this conclusioun, ther help-

eth me this, that I have yshewed herbiforn, that alle power is to be noumbred among thinges that men oughten requere. And I have shewed that alle thinges, that oughten ben desired, ben referred to good, right as to a maner heighte of hir nature. But for to mowen don yvel and felonye may nat ben referred to good. Thanne nis nat yvel of the noumbir of thinges that oughte ben desired. But alle power oughte ben desired & requered. Than is it open and cleer that the power ne the mowing of shrewes nis no power; and of alle thise thinges it sheweth wel, that the goode folke ben certeinly mighty, and the shrewes douteles ben unmighty. And it is cleer and open that thilke opinoun of Plato is verray and sooth, that seith, that only wyse men may doon that they desiren; & shrewes mowen haunten that hem lyketh, but that they desiren, that is to seyn, to comen to soveraign good, they ne han no power to accomplisshen that. For shrewes don that hem list, whan, by tho thinges in which they deliten, they wenen to atene to thilke good that they desiren; but they ne geten ne atenen nat therto, for vyces ne comen nat to blisfulnesse.

Metre II.

Quos vides sedere celsos.

WHOSO THAT the cover-toures of hir veyne aparailes mighte strepen of thise proude kinges, that thou seest sitten on heigh in hir chaires glitteringe in shyninge purple, envircouned with sorrowful armures, manasinge with cruel mouth, blowinge by woodnesse of herte, he shulde seen thanne that thilke lordes beren withinne hir corages ful streite cheines. For lecherye tormenteth hem in that oon syde with gredy venims; and troublable ire, that araiseth in him the flodes of troublings, tormenteth upon that other syde hir thought; or sorwe halt hem very and ycaught; or slydinge and deceivinge hope tormenteth hem. And therefore, sen thou seest oon heed, that is to seyn, oon tyrant, beren so manye tyrannies, thanne ne doth thilke tyrant nat that he desireth, sin he is cast down with so manye wikkede lordes; that is to seyn, with so manye vyces, that han so wikkedy lordshipes over him.



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FOR yif he be ardaunt in avaryce, and that he be a ravinour by violence of foreine riches, thou shalt seyn that he is lyke to the wolf. And yif he be felonous and withoute reste, and exercise his tonge to chydinges, thou shalt lyght him to the hound. And yif he be a preney awaifour yhid, and rejoyseth him to ravish she by wyles, thou shalt seyn him lyke to

Metre III.
Neritū dulcis.

B (Albeisto so that the godhed of) Mer-
curie, that is cleped the brid of Ar-
cadie, hath had mercy of the duke
Allices, bisged with dyverse yveles, and
hath unbounden him fro the pestilence of
his osterse, algates the rowers and the
mariners haddn by this ydrawen into hir
mouthes & dronken the wikkede drinkes.
Chey that weren woxen swyn haddn by
this ychaunged hir mete of breed, for to
eten akornes of oles. Non of hir limes ne
dwelth with hem hole, but they han lost
the voice and the body; only hir thought
dwelth with hem stable, that wepeth and
bivwelth the monstrous chaunginge that
they suffer. O overlight hand (as who
seyth, O feble and light is the hand of
Circes the enchaunteresse, that chaungeth
the bodies of folkes into bestes, to regard
and to comparisoun of mutacioun that is
maketh by vyces); ne the herbes of Circes
ne ben nat mighty, for albeist so that they
may chaungen the limes of the body, al-
gates wit they may nat chaunge the hertes;

Prose IV.
Tum ego, fateor, inquam.



SO shullen they, quod she, soner,
peraventure, than thou woldest; or
soner than they hemself wene to
lakken mowinge to don yvel. for ther nis
nothing so late in so shorte boundes of
this tyf, that is long to abyde, nameliche,

to a corage immortal; of whiche shrewes the grete hope, & the hye compassinges of shrewednesses, is ofte destroyed by a sodeyn ende, or they ben war; & that thing estableth to shrewes the ende of hir shrewednesse. for yif that shrewednesse maketh wrecches, than mot he nedes ben most wrecched that lengest is a shrewe; the whiche wikked shrewes wolde I demen aldermost unsely and caitifs, yif that hir shrewednesse ne were finisshed, at the leste way, by the outtereste deeth. for yif I have concluded sooth of the unselnesse of shrewednesse, than sheweth it cleerly that thilke wrecchednesse is withouten ende, the whiche is certain to ben perdurable. Certes, quod I, this conclusioun is hard & wonderful to graunte; but I knowe wel that it acordeth moche to the thinges that I have graunted herbiforn.

THOU hast, quod she, the right estimacioun of this; but whosoever were that it be a hard thing to acorde him to a conclusioun, it is right that he shewe that some of the premisses ben false; or elles he moot shewe that the collacioun of proposiciouns nis nat speedful to a necesarie conclusioun. And yif it be nat so, but that the premisses ben ygraunted, ther is not why he sholde blame the argument. for this thing that I shal telle thee now ne shal nat seme lasse wonderful; but of the thinges that ben taken also it is necessarie; as who seyth, it folweth of that which that is purposed biforn. What is that? quod I.

CERTES, quod she, that is, that thise wikked shrewes ben more blisful, or elles lasse wrecches, that abyen the torments that they han deserved, than yif no peyne of justice ne chastysede hem. Ne this ne seye I nat now, for that any man mighte thenke, that the maners of shrewes ben coriged and chastysed by venjaunce, and that they ben brought to the right wey by the drede of the torment, ne for that they yeven to other folk ensaumple to fleen fro vyces; but I understande yit in another manere, that shrewes ben more unsely whan they ne ben nat punished, albeit so that ther ne be had no resoun or lawe of correccioun, ne non ensaumple of lokinge. And what manere shal that ben, quod I, other than hath be told herbiforn? Have we nat thanne graunted, quod she, that goode folk ben blisful, and shrewes ben wrecches? Vis, quod I. Thanne, quod she, yif that any good were added to the wrecchednesse of any wight, nis he nat more weleful than he that ne hath no medlinge of good in his solitarie wrecchednesse? So semeth it, quod I.

AND what seystow thanne, quod she, of thilke wrecche that laketh alle goodes, so that no good nis medled in his wrecchednesse, & yit, over al his wrecchednesse for which he is a wrecche, ther be yit another yvel anexed and knyt to him, shal nat men demen him more unsely than thilke wrecche of whiche the unselnesse is releved by the participacioun of som good? Why sholde he nat? quod I.

THANNE, certes, quod she, han shrewes, whan they ben punished, somewhat of good anexed to hir wrecchednesse, that is to seyn, the same peyne that they suffren, which that is good by the resoun of justice; and whan thilke same shrewes ascapen withoute torment, over the wikkednesse that they han don, that is to seyn, defaute of peyne; which yvel for the deserte of felonye. In meye nat denyet, quod I. Moche more thanne, quod she, ben shrewes unsely, whan they ben wrongfully delivered fro peyne, than whan they ben punished by rightful venjaunce. But this is open thing & cleer, that it is right that shrewes ben punished, and it is wikkednesse & wrong that they escapen unpunished. Who mighte denye that? quod I. But, quod she, may any man denye that al that is right nis good; & also the contrarie, that al that is wrong is wikke? Certes, quod I, these thinges ben clere ynough; and that we han concluded a litel herbiforn. But I praye thee that thou telle me, yif thou acordest to leten no torment to sowles, after that the body is ended by the deeth; this is to seyn, understandestow aught that sowles han any torment after the deeth of the body?

CERTES, quod she, ye; & that right greet; of which sowles, quod she, I trowe that some ben tormented by asprenesse of peyne; and some sowles, I trowe, ben exercised by a purginge mekenesse. But my conseil nis nat to determine of these peynes. But I have travailed and told yit hiderto, for thou sholdest knowe that the mowinge of shrewes, which mowinge thee semeth to ben unworthy, nis no mowinge; & eek of shrewes, of which thou pleinedest that they ne were nat punished, that thou woldest seen that they ne weren nevermo withouten the torments of hir wikkednesse: and of the licence of the mowinge to don yvel, that thou preydest that it mighte some ben ended, & that thou woldest fayn lermen that it ne sholde nat longe dure; and that shrewes ben more unsely yif they were of lenger duringe, and most unsely yif they weren perdurable.

And after this, I have shewed thee that more unsely ben shrewes, whan they escapen withoute hir rightful peyne, than whan they ben punished by rightful venjaunce. And of this sentence folweth it, that thanne ben shrewes constrained at the laste with most grevous torment, whan men wene that they ne be nat punished.

HAN I consider thy resouns, quod I, I ne trowe nat that men seyn anything more verayly. And yif I torne ayein to the studies of men, who is he to whom it sholde seme that he ne sholde nat only leven these thinges, but eek gladly herkne hem?

CERTES, quod she, so it is; but men may nat. for they han hir eyen so wont to the darknesse of erthely thinges, that they ne may nat liften hem up to the light of cleer sothfastnesse; but they ben lyke to briddes, of which the night lightneth hir lokinge, and the day blindeth hem. for whan men loken nat the ordre of thinges, but hir lustes and talents, they wene that either the leve or the mowinge to don wikkednesse, or elles the scaping withoute peyne, be weleful. But consider the judgement of the perdurable lawe. for yif thou conferme thy corage to the beste thinges, thou ne hast no nede of no juge to yeven thee prys or mede; for thou hast joyned thyself to the most excellent thing. And yif thou have enclyned thy studies to the wikked thinges, ne seek no foreyne wreker out of thyself; for thou thyself hast thrist thyself into wikke thinges: right as thou mightest loken by diverse tymes the foul erthe and the heveme, and that alle other thinges stinten fro withoute, so that thou nere neither in heveme ne in erthe, ne saye nothing more; than it sholde semen to thee, as by only resoun of lokinge, that thou were now in the sterres and now in the erthe. But the poeple ne loketh nat on these thinges. What thanne? Shal we thanne aprochen us to hem that I have shewed that they ben lyk to bestes? And what woltow seyn of this: yif that a man hadde al forlorn his sighte and hadde foryeten that he ever saugh, and wende that nothing ne faylede him of perfeccioun of mankinde, now we that mighten seen the same thinges, wolde we nat wene that he were blinde? Ne also ne acordeth nat the poeple to that I shal seyn, the which thing is sustened by a stronge foundement of resouns, that is to seyn, that more unsely ben they that don wrong to othre folk than they that the wrong suffren. I wolde heren thilke same resouns, quod I. Denyestow, quod she, that alle shrewes ne ben worthy to han torment? Nay, quod I. But,

quod she, I am certain, by many resouns, that shrewes ben unsely. It acordeth, quod I. Thanne ne doutestow nat, quod she, that thilke folk that ben worthy of torment, that they ne ben wrecches? It acordeth wel, quod I. Yif thou were thanne, quod she, yset a juge or a knower of thinges, whether, trowestow, that men sholden tormenten him that hath don the wrong, or elles him that hath suffred the wrong? I ne doute nat, quod I, that I nolde don suffisaunt satisfaccioun to him that hadde suffred the wrong by the sorwe of him that hadde don the wrong. Thanne semeth it, quod she, that the doere of wrong is more wrecche than he that suffred wrong? That folweth wel, quod I.

THAN, quod she, by these causes & by othre causes that ben enforced by the same rote, filthe or sinne, by the propre nature of it, maketh men wrecches; & it sheweth wel, that the wrong that men don nis nat the wrecchednesse of him that receyveth the wrong, but the wrecchednesse of him that doth the wrong. But certes, quod she, thise oratours or advocats don al the contrarye; for they enforchen hem to commoeve the juges to han pitee of hem that han suffred & receyved the thinges that ben grevous and aspre, and yit men sholden more rightfully han pitee of hem that don the grevaunces and the wronges; the whiche shrewes, it were a more covenable thing, that the accusours or advocats, nat wroth but pitous & debonaire, ledden tho shrewes that han don wrong to the judgement, right as men leden syke folk to the leche, for that they sholde seken out the maladyes of sinne by torment. And by this covenant, either the entente of deffendours or advocats sholde faylen and cesen in al, or elles, yif the office of advocats wolde bettre profiten to men, it sholde ben torned into the habite of accusacioun; that is to seyn, they sholden accuse shrewes, and nat excuse hem. And eek the shrewes hemself, yif hit were leverful to hem to seen at any clifte the vertu that they han forleten, & sawen that they sholden putten adoun the filthes of hir vyces, by the torments of peynes, they ne oughtenat, right for the recompensacioun for to geten hem bountee and prowesse which that they han lost, demen ne holden that thilke peynes weren torments to hem; & eek they wolden refuse the attendaunce of hir advocats, and taken hemself to hir juges and to hir accusours. for which it bitydeth that, as to the wyse folk, ther nis no place yleten to hate; that is to seyn, that ne hate hath no place amonges wyse men. for no wight nil haten goode men,

but yif he were overmochel a fool; and for to haten shrewes, it nis no resoun. for right so as languissinge is maladye of body, right so ben vyces & sinne maladye of corage. And so as we ne deme nat, that they that ben syke of hir body ben worthy to ben hated, but rather worthy of pitee: wel more worthy, nat to ben hated, but for to ben had in pitee, ben they of whiche the thoughtes ben constreined by felonous wikkednesse, that is more cruel than any languissinge of body.

Metre IV.

Quid tantos iuvat excitare motus.

NAT delyteth you to excyten so grete moevinges of hate- redes, & to hasten and bisiten the fatal disposicioun of your deeth with your propre handes? that is to seyn, by batailes or by contek. for yif ye axen the deeth, it hasteth him of his owne wil; ne deeth ne tarieth nat his swifte hors. And the men that the serpent and the lyoun and the tygre and the bere and the boor seken to sleen with hir teeth, yit thilke same men seken to sleen everich of hem other with swerd. Lo! for hir maneres ben dyverse and descordaunt, they moeven unrightful osten and cruel batailes, & wilnen to perisshe by entrechaunginge of dartes. But the resoun of crueltee nis nat ynough rightful.

ULTOU thanne yelden a coven- able guerdoun to the desertes of men? Love right fully goode folk, and have pitee on shrewes.

Prose V.

Hic ego video inquam.

HAS see I wel, quod I, either what blisfulnesse or elles what unseliness is establisshed in the desertes of goode men and of shrewes. But in this ilke fortune of poeple I see somwhat of good & somwhat of yvel. for no wyse man hath lever ben exyled, poore and nedy, and nameles, than for to dwellen in his citee and flouren of riches, and be redoutable by honour, and strong of power. for in this wyse more cleerly and more witnessfully is the office of wyse men ytreted, whan the blisfulnesse and the poustee of governours is, as it were, yshad amonges poeple that be neighebouris & subgits; sin that, namely, prisoun, lawe, & thise othre torments of laweful peynes ben rather owed to fe-

lonous citezeins, for the whiche felonous than for good folk. Thanne I mervail me greetly, quod I, why that the thinges ben so mis entrechaunged, that torments of felonyes pressen and confounden goode folk, & shrewes ravisschen medes of vertu, and ben in honours & in gret estats. And I desyre eek for to witen of thee, what semeth thee to ben the resoun of this so dre wel the lasse, yif I trowede that al thise thinges weren medled by fortounous astonyinge God, governour of thinges, men godes and mirthes, and to shrewes yveles and aspre thinges; and yeveth a shrewes he graunteth hem hir wil and that they desyren: what difference thanne may ther be bitwixen that that God doth, and the happe of fortune, yif men ne knowe nat the cause why that it is?

NE it nis no mervail, quod she, though that men wenen that ther be some- what folissh and confuse, whan the resoun of the ordre is unknowe. But although that thou ne knowe nat the cause of so greet a disposicioun, natheles, for as moche as God, the gode governour, a- tempredh & governeth the world, ne doute thee nat that alle thinges ben doon aright.

Metre V.

Si quis Arcturi sidera nescit.

NOSO that ne knowenat the sterres of Arcture, ytorment neigh to the soverein contrere or point, that is to seyn, ytorment neigh to the soverein pool of the firmament, & wot nat why the sterre Bootes passeth or gadereth his weynes, and drencheth his late flambe in the see, & why that Bootes the sterre unfoldeth his overswifte arysinges, thanne shal he wondren of the lawe of the heye eyr.

AND eek, yif that he ne knowe nat why that the hornes of the fulle mone weren pale & infect by the boundes of the derkenight; and how the mone, dark and confuse, discovereth the sterres that she hadde ycovered by hir clere visage. The comune errour moeveth folk, and maketh wery hir basins of bras by thikke strokes: that is to seyn, that ther is a maner of poeple that highte Coribantes, that wenen that, whan the mone is in the eclipse, that it be enchaunted; and therefore, for to rescowe the mone, they beten hir basins with thikke strokes.

NE no man ne wondreth whan the blastes of the wind Chorus beten the strondes of the see by quakinge fodes; ne no man ne wondreth whan the weighte of the snowe, yharded by the colde, is resolved by the brenninge hete of Phebus the sonne; for heer seen men redely the causes.

BUT the causes yhid, that is to seyn, in hevene, troublen the brestes of men; the moevable poeple is astoned of alle thinges that comen selde & sodeinly in our age. But yif the troubyl error of our ignorance departede fro us, so that we wisten the causes why that swiche thinges bityden, certes, they sholden cese to seme wondres.

Prose VI.

Ita est, inquam.

HAS is it, quod I. But so as thou hast yeven or bihight me to unwrappen the hid causes of thinges, & to discovere me the resounscovered with derknesses, I prey thee that thou devyse and juge me of this matere, and that thou dome to understonden it; for this miracle or this wonder troubleth me right gretly.

AND thanne she, a litel what smylinge, seyde: Thou clepest me, quod she, to telle thing that is grettest of alle thinges that mowen ben axed, and to the whiche questiou unnethes is ther aught ymough to laven it; as who seyth, unnethes is ther suffisauntly anything to answere parfitly to thy questiou. for the matere of it is swich, that whan o doute is determined & cut away, ther wexen other doutes withoute number; right as the hevedes wexen of Ydre, the serpent that Ercules slowh. Ne ther ne were no manere ne non ende, but yif that a wight constreinede tho doutes by a right lyfly and quik fyr of thought; that is to seyn, by vigour and strengthe of wit. for in this manere men weren wont to maken questions of the simplicitee of the purviaunce of God, and of the ordre of destinee, & of sodein happe, and of the knowinge and predestinacioun divyne, and of the libertee of free wille; the whiche thinges thou thyself apercevest wel, of what weight they ben. But for as mochel as the knowinge of thise thinges is a maner porcioun of the medicine of thee, albeit so that I have litel tyme to don it, yit natheles I wol enforen me to shewe somwhat of it. But although the norissshinges of ditee of musike delyteth thee, thou

most suffren and forberen a litel of thilke delyte, while that I weve to thee resouns yknit by ordre.

Sit lyketh to thee, quod I, so do. Thaspek she right as by another biginninge, and seyde thus. The engendringe of alle thinges, quod she, and alle the progressiouns of muable nature, and al that moeveth in any manere, taketh his causes, his ordre, and his formes, of the stableness of the divyne thoght; & thilke divyne thought, that is yset and put in the tour, that is to seyn, in the heichte, of the simplicitee of God, stablisseth many maner gyses to thinges that ben to done; the whiche maner, whan that men loken it in thilke pure clenness of the divyne intelligence, it is ycleped purviaunce; but whan thilke maner is referred by men to thinges that it moeveth & disponeth, thanne of olde men it was cleped destinee. The whiche thinges, yif that any wight loketh wel in his thought the strengthe of that oon & of that other, he shal lightly mowen seen, that thise two thinges ben dyverse. for purviaunce is thilke divyne reason that is establisshed in the soverein prince of thinges; the whiche purviaunce disponeth alle thinges. But destinee is the disposicioun and ordinaunce clyvinge to moevable thinges, by the whiche disposicioun the purviaunce knitteth alle thinges in hir ordres; for purviaunce embraceth alle thinges tohepe, although that they ben dyverse, & although they ben infinite; but destinee departeth & ordeineth alle thinges singularly, and divyded in moevinges, in places, in formes, in tymes, as thus: lat the unfoldinge of temporel ordinaunce, assembled and ooned in the lokinge of the divyne thought, be cleped purviaunce; and thilke same assemblinge and ooning, divyded and unfolden by tymes, lat that ben called destinee. And albeit so that thise thinges ben dyverse, yit natheles hangeth that oon on that other; for why the order destinal procedeth of the simplicitee of purviaunce, for right as a werkman, that aperceyveth in his thoght the forme of the thing that he wol make, and moeveth the effect of the werk, and ledeth that he hadde loket bifrom in his thoght simply & presently, by temporel ordinaunce: certes, right so God disponeth in his purviaunce, singularly and stably, the thinges that ben to done, but he aministred in many maneres and in dyverse tymes, by destinee, thilke same thinges that he hath disponed.

THANNE, whether that destinee be exercysed outhur by some divyne spirits, servaunts to the divyne purviaunce, or elles by som sowl, or elles by alle nature servinge to God, or elles by

the celestial moevings of sterres, or elles by the vertu of anges, or elles by the dyverse subtiltee of develes, or elles by any of hem, or elles by hem alle, the destinal ordinaunce is wyoven and accomplished. Certes, it is open thing, that the purviaunce is an unmoveable and simple forme of thinges to done; & the moveable bond and the temporel ordinaunce of thinges, whiche that the dyvyn simplicittee of purviaunce hath ordeyned to done, that is destinee. For which it is, that alle thinges that ben put under destinee ben, certes, subgits to purviaunce, to whiche purviaunce destinee itself is subgit and under. But some thinges ben put under purviaunce, that surmounten the ordinaunce of destinee; and tho ben thilke that stably ben yfiched negh to the firste godhed: they surmounten the ordre of destinal moveabletee. For right as of cercles that tornen aboute a same centre or aboute a poynt, thilke cerle that is innerest or most with inne joyneth to the simplesse of the middel, and is, as it were, a centre or a poynt to that other cerles that tornen abouten him; and thilke that is outterest, compassed by larger environninge, is unfolden by larger spaces, in so moche as it is farthest fro the middel simplicittee of the poynt; and yif ther be anything that knitteth and felawshippeth himself to thilke middel poynt, it is constrained into simplicittee, that is to seyn, into unmoveabletee, & it ceaseth to be shad & to fleten dyversely: right so, by semblable resoun, thilke thing that departeth farthest fro the first thought of God, it is unfolden & summitteth to gretter bondes of destinee: and in so moche is the thing more free and laus fro destinee, as it axeth and holdeth him ner to thilke centre of thinges, that is to seyn, God. And yif the thing clyveth to the stedefastnesse of the thought of God, and be withoute moevinge, certes, it surmounteth the necessitee of destinee. Channe right swich comparison as it is of skilinge to understandinge, & of thing that is engendred to thing that is, and of tyme to eternitee, and of the cerle to the centre, right so is the ordre of moveable destinee to the stable simplicittee of purviaunce.

THILKE ordinance moeveth the hev-
ene and the sterres, and attempreth
the elements togider amonges hem-
self, and transformeth hem by entre-
changeable mutacion; and thilke same
orde neweth ayein alle thinges growinge
and fallinge adoun, by semblable progres-
siouns of seedes & of sexes, that is to seyn,
male and femele. And this ilke orde con-
streineth the fortunes & the dedes of men
by a bond of causes, nat able to ben un-

bounde; the whiche destinal causes, when
 they passen out fro the beginninges of
 the unmoeeable puruiance, it moe needs be
 that they be nat mutable. And thus ben
 the thinges ful wel governed, yif that ben
 simplicitie dwelling in the diuine thought
 sheweth forth the ordre of causes, unable
 to ben ybowed; and this ordre constraineth
 by his propre estatete the moeeable
 thinges, or elles they sholden fleten folly,
 for which it is, that alle thinges seemen to
 ben confus and trouble to the men, for we
 nemowen nat considere thilke ordinaunce
 natheles, the propre maner of every thinges
 dressinge hem to goode, disponeth his
 alle.

FOR ther nis nothing don for cause of yvel; ne thilke thing that is don by wikkede folk nis nat don for yvel. The whiche shrewes, as I have shewed ful plentifulously, seken good, but wikked exourmistorneth hem, ne the ordre coming fro the poynt of soverain good ne declineth nat for his beginningne. But thou mairst seyn, what unreste may ben a worse confusoun than that gode men han somtyme adversitee and somtyme prosperitee, and shrewes also now han thinges that they desiren, and now thinges that they hate? Whether men liven now in swich hoolnesse of thought, (as who seyth, ben men now so wyse), that swiche folk as they demen to ben gode folk or shrewes, that it moste nedes ben that folk ben swiche as they wenen? But in this manere the domes of men discorden, that thilke men that some folk demen worthy of mede, other folk demen hem worthy of torment. But lat us graunte. I pose that som man may wel demen or knowen the gode folk and the badde; may he thanne knowen & seen thilke innereste atemprance of corages, as it hath ben wont to be seyde of bodies; as who seyth, may a man speken & determinen of atemprances in corages, as men were wont to demen or speken of complexionis and atemprances of bodies? Ne it is nat an unlyk miracle, to hem that ne knowen that, (as who seith, but it is lyke a mervell or a miracle to hem that ne knowen it nat), why that swete thinges ben covenable to some bodies that ben hole, and to some bodies bittere thinges ben covenable; and also, why that some syke folk ben holpen with lighte medicines, & some folk ben holpen with sharpe medicines. But natheles, the leche that knoweth the manere and the atemprance of hele & of maladye, ne merveileth of it nothing. But what other thing semeth hele of corages but bountee and prowessse? And what other thing semeth maladye of corages but vyces? Whis elles keper of good or dryer awaye of yvel, but

God, gouernour and lecher of thoughtes? The whiche God, whan he hath biholden the heye tour of his purueance, he knoweth that is covenable to every wight, and leneth hem that he wot that is covenable to hem. Lo, herof comth and herof isacion this noble miracle of the ordre destined, whan God, that al knoweth, doth swiche thing, of which thing that unknowinge folk ben astoned. But for to constrainse, as whoseyth, but for to comprehend & telle a fewe thinges of the diuynedeepeesse, the whiche that mannes resoun may understonde, thilkeman that thou wenest to ben right iuste and right keepinge of eequite, the contrarie of that semeth to the diuynedeepeesse, that al wot. And Lucan, my familer, telleth that The victorios cause lykede to the goddess, and the cause overcome lykede to Catoun. Thanne, whatsoever thou mayst seen that is don in this world unhoped or unwened, certes, it is the right orde of thinges; but, as to thy wilfullede opinoun, it is a confusioun. But I suppose that som man be so wel ythewed, that the diuyned judgement & the judgement of mankinde acorden hem togider of him; but he is so unstedefast of corage, that, yif any aduersitee come to him, he wol foreleten, paraventure, to continue innocence, by the whiche he ne may nat withholden fortune. Thanne the wyse dispensacioun of God spareth him, the whiche man aduersitee mighte enpeyren; for that God wol nat suffer him to traualle, to whom that traualle nis nat covenable. Another man is parfit in alle vertues, and is an holy man, & negh to God, so that the puruiance of God wolde demen, that it were a felonye that he were touched with any aduersitees; so that he wol nat suffer that swich a man be moeved with any bodily maladye. But so as seyde a philosophe, the more excellent by me: he seyde in Grek, that Vertues han edified the body of the holy man. And ofte tyme it biyethed, that the somme of thinges that ben to done is taken to gouerne to gode folk, for that the malice haboundaunt of shrewes sholde ben abated. And God yeveth & departeeth to othere folk prosperites and aduersitees ymedled toche, after the qualitee of hir corages, and remoredeth som folk by aduersitee, for they ne sholde nat waxen proude by longe wellefulnesse. And other folk he suffreth to ben traualled with harde thinges, for that they sholden confermen the vertues of corage by the usage and exercitacioun of patience. And other folk dreden more than theyoughten that whiche they mighten wel beren; and somme dispysse that they mowe nat beren; & thilke folk God ledeth into experience of himself by aspre and

sorful things. And many othere folk han bought honourable renoun of this world by the prys of glorious deeth. And som men, that ne mowen nat ben overcomen by tormentis, have yeven ensaumple to othere folk, that vertu may nat ben overcomen by adversiteis; and of alle thinges ther nis no doute, that they ne ben don rightfully and ordenely, to the profit of hem to whom we seen thises thinges bytyle. For certes, that adversitee comth somtyme to shrewes, & somtyme that that they desiren, it comth of thise forseide causes. And of sorful thinges that bityden to shrewes, certes, no man ne wondreth; for alle men wenen that they han wel deserved it, and that they ben of wikkede merite; of whiche shrewes the torment somtyme agasteth othere to don felonies, and somtyme it amendeth hem that suffren the tormentis. And the prosperitee that is yeven to shrewes sheweth a greet argument to gode folk, what thing they sholde demen of thilke welfulnesse, the whiche prosperitee men seen ofte serven to shrewes. In the which thing I trowe that God dispenseth; for peraventure, the nature of som man is so overthrowinge to yvel, and so unconvenable, that the nedey povertie of his houshold mighte rather egeen him to don felonies. And to the maladye of him God putteth remedie, to yeven him richesces. And som othere man biholdeth his conscience defouled with sinnes, and maketh; comparisson of his fortune and of himself; and dredeth, peraventure, that his blisfulnesse, of which the usage is joyeful to him, that the lesinge of thilke blisfulnesse ne be nat sorful to him; and therfor he wol change his maneres, and, for he dredeth to lese his fortune, he forleteth his wikkednesse. To othere folk is welfulnesse yeven unworthily, the whiche overthroweth hem into distrucceioun that they han deserved. And to som othere folk is yeven power to punisshen, for that it shal be cause of continuacioun and exercysinge to gode folk and cause of torment to shrewes. For so as ther nis non alyaucance bytwixe gode folk and shrewes, ne shrewes ne mowen nat accorden amonges hemself. And why nat? for shrewes discorden of hemself by hir vyces, the whiche vyces al torenden hir consciences; & don ofte tyme thinges, the whiche thinges, when they han don hem, they demen that tho thinges ne sholden nat han ben don. for which thing thilke soverain purveaunce hath maked ofte tyme fair miracle; so that shrewes han maked shrewes to ben gode men. for whan that som shrewes seen that they suffren wrongfully felonies of othere shrewes, they wexen eschaufed into hate of hem that anye-

den hem, and retornen to the frut of vertu, whan they studien to ben unlyk to hem that they han hated. Certes, only this is the diuyn might, to the whiche might yveles ben thanne gode, whan it useth tho yveles covenably, & draweth out the effect of any gode; as who seyth, that yvel is good only to the might of God, for the might of God ordeyneth thilke yvel to good.

FORoon ordre embraseth alle thinges, so that what wight that departeth fro the resoun of thilke ordre which that is assigned to him, algates yit he slydeth into another ordre, so that nothing nis leueful to folye in the reame of the diuyn purviaunce; as who seyth, nothing nis withouten ordinaunce in the reame of the diuyn purviaunce; sin that the right stronge God governeth alle thinges in this world. for it nis nat leueful to man to comprehenden by wit, ne unfolden by word, alle the subtil ordinaunces and disposicions of the diuyn entente. for only it oughte suffise to han loked, that God himself, maker of alle natures, ordeineth and dresseth alle thinges to gode; whyl that he hasteth to withholden the thinges that he hath makid into his semblaunce, that is to seyn, for to withholden thinges into good, for he himself is good, he chaseth out al yvel fro the boundes of his comunaltee by the ordre of necessitee destynable, for which it folweth, that yif thou loke the purviaunce ordeininge the thinges that men wenen ben outrageous or haboundant in erthes, thou ne shalt nat seen in no place nothing of yvel. But I see now that thou art charged with the weighte of the questioun, & very with the lengthe of my resoun; and that thou abydest som sweetnesse of songe. Tak thanne this draught; and whan thou art wel refreshed & refect, thou shal be more stedefast to styte into heyere questiouns.

Metre VI.

Si vis celsi jura tonantis.

If thou, wys, wilt demen in thy pure thought the rightes or the lawes of the heye thonderer, that is to seyn, of God, loke thou and bihold the heightes of the soverain hevvene. There kepen the sterres, by rightful alliaunce of thinges, hir olde pees. The sonne, ymooved by his rody fyr, ne distorbeth nat the colde cercle of the mone. Ne the sterrey cleped The Bere, that enclyneth his ravissching courses abouten the soverain heighte of the worlde, ne the same sterre Ursa nis nevermo wasshen in the depe westrene see, ne coveiteth nat to dey, en his flaumbes in the see of the occian, al

thogh he see othre sterres yplounged in the see. And Hesperus the sterre bodeth & telleth alwey the late nightes; & Lucifer the sterre bringeth ayein the clere day.

AND thus maketh Love entrechaungeable the perdurable courses; & thus is discordable bataile yput out of the contree of the sterres. This acordance & tempreth by evenelyk maneres the elements, that the moiste thinges, stryvinge with the drye thinges, yeven place by feyth to the hote thinges; and that the hevy erthes avalen by hir weightes. By swote smelles in the floury yeer yildeth warminge; and the hote somer sesum cornes; & autumpne comth ayein, hevvy of apples; and the fleting reyn bidweth the winter. This atemptraunce norissheth and bringeth forth al thing that bretheth lyf in this world; & thilke same atemptraunce, drencheth under the laste deeth, alle thinges yborn.

AMONGES these thinges sitteth the heye maker, king and lord, welc and biginninge, lawe & wys juge, to don equitee; and governeth and enclyneth the brydles of thinges. And tho thinges that he stereth to gon by moevinge, he withdraweth and aresteth; and affermeth the moevable or wandringe thinges. for yif that he ne clepede ayein the right goinge of thinges, and yif that he ne constreinede hem nat eftsones into roundnesses enclynede, the thinges that ben now continuued by stable ordinaunce, they sholden departen from hir welle, that is to seyn, from hir biginninge, and faylen, that is to seyn, torne into nought.

THIS is the comune Love to alle thinges; and alle thinges axen to ben holden by the fyn of good, for elles ne mighten they nat lasten, yif they ne come nat eftsones ayein, by Love retorned, to the cause that hath yeven hem beinge, that is to seyn, to God.

Prose VII.

Tamne igitur vides.

EESTOW NAT thanne what thing folweth alle the thinges that I have seyde? **Bocce.** What thing? quod I. Certes, quod she, al outrelly, that alle fortune is good. And how may that be? quod I.

WE understand, quod she, so as alle fortune, whether so it be joyeful for tyme or aspre fortune, is yeven either by cause of guerdoning or elles of exercysing of good folk, or elles by cause to punysshon or elles chastysen shrewes; thanne is alle fortune good, the whiche fortune is certain that it be either rightful or elles profitable.

FORSOthe, this is a fulverray resoun, quod I; & yif I consider the purviaunce and the destinee that thou taughtest me a litel herbiform, this sentence is sustened by stedefast resouns. But yif it lyke unto thee, lat us noumbren hem amonges thilke thinges, of whiche thou seydest a litel herbiform, that they ne were nat able to ben wened to the poeple. Why so? quod she. For that the comune word of men, quod I, misuseth this maner speche of fortune, & seyn ofte tymes that the fortune of som wight is wikkede. Wiltow thanne, quod she, that I aproche a litel to the wordes of the poeple, so that it seme nat to hem that I be overmoche departed as fro the usage of mankinde? As thou wilt, quod I. Demestow nat, quod she, that al thing that profiteth is good? Yis, quod I. And certes, thilke thing that exercyseth or corigeth, profiteth. I confesse it wel, quod I. Thanne is it good? quod she. Why nat? quod I.

WHAT this is the fortune, quod she, of hem that either ben put in vertu and bataillen ayeins aspre thinges, or elles of hem that eschuen & declynen fro vyces and taken the wey of vertu. This ne may I nat deny, quod I. But what seystow of the mery fortune that is yeven to good folk in guerdoun? Demeth aught the poeple that it is wikked? Nay, forsothe quod I; but they demen, as it sooth is, that it is right good.

WHAT what seystow of that other fortune, quod she, that, although that it be aspre, & restrineth the shrewes by rightful torment, weneth aught the poeple that it be good? Nay, quod I, but the poeple demeth that it is most wretched of alle thinges that may ben thought. War now, & loke wel, quod she, lest that we, in folwinge the opinioun of the poeple, have confessed and concluded thing that is unable to be wened to the poeple. What is that? quod I.

CERTES, quod she, it folweth or comth of thinges that ben graunted, that alle fortune, whatsoever it be, of hem that ben either in possession of vertu, or in the encre of vertu, or elles in the purchasinge of vertu, that thilke fortune is good; and that alle fortune is right wikkede to hem that dwellen in shrewednesse; as who seyth, and thus weneth nat

the poeple. That is sooth, quod I, albeit so that no man dar confesse it ne biknowen it.

WHAT so? quod she; for right as the stronge man ne semeth nat to abaissen or disdaignen as ofte tyme as he hereth the noise of the bataile, ne also it ne semeth nat, to the wyse man, to beren it grevously, as ofte as he is lad into the stryf of fortune, for bothe to that oon man and eek to that other thilke difficultee is the matere; to that oon man, of encre of his glorious renoun, and to that other man, to conforme his sapience, that is to seyn, to the asprenesse of his estat. for therfore is it called Vertu, for that it susteneth & enforseth, by hise strengthes, that it nis nat overcomen by adversitees. Ne certes, thou that art put in the encre or in the heighte of vertu, ne hast nat comen to fleten with delices, and for to welken in bodily luste; thou sowest or plauntest a ful egre bataile in thy corage ayeins every fortune: for that the sorwful fortune ne confounde thee nat, ne that the mery fortune ne corumpeth thee nat, occupye the mene by stedefast strengthes. for al that ever is under the mene, or elles al that overpasseth the mene, despyseth welefulnesse (as who seyth, it is vicious), & ne hath no mede of his travaille, for it is set in your hand (as who seyth, it lyth in your power) what fortune yow is levest, that is to seyn, good or yvel. for alle fortune that semeth sharp or aspre, yif it ne exercyse nat the gode folk ne chastyseth the wikked folk, it punissheth.

Metre VII.

Bella bis quinis operatus annis.

WHAT wreker Attrides, that is to seyn, Agamenon, that wroughte and continuede the batailes by ten yer, recovered & purgede in wrekinge, by the destruccioun of Troye, the loste chaumbres of mariage of his brother; this is to seyn, that he, Agamenon, wan ayein Eleyne, that was Menelaus wyf his brother. In the mene whyle that thilke Agamenon desirede to yeven sayles to the Grekissh navye, and boughte ayein the windes by blood, he unclothe him of pitee of fader; & the sory preest yiveth in sacrificinge the wretched cuttinge of throte of the doughter; that is to seyn, that Agamenon let cutten the throte of his doughter by the preest, to maken allyaunce with his goddes, & for to han winde with whiche he mighte wenden to Troye.

ULIXES, that is to seyn, Ulixes, biwepte his felawes ylorn, the whiche felawes the ferse Poliphemus, lig

ginge in his grete cave, hadde freten and dreynt in his empty wombe. But natheles Poliphemus, wood for his blinde visages, yald to Ulixes joye by his sorwful teres; this is to seyn, that Ulixes smoot out the eye of Poliphemus that stood in his forehead, for which Ulixes hadde joye, when he say Poliphemus wepinge and blinde.

HERCULES is celebrable for his harde travailles; he dauntede the proude Centaures, half hors, half man; and he birafte the dispoylinge fro the cruel lyoun, that is to seyn, he slowh the lyoun & rafte him his skin. He smoot the briddes that highten Arpyes with certein arwes. He ravisshe apples fro the wakinge dragoun, and his hand was the more hevy for the goldene metal. He drew Cerberus, the hound of helle, by his treble cheyne. He, overcomer, as it is seyde, hath put an unmeke lord foddre to his cruel hors; this is to seyn, that Hercules slowh Diomedes, & made his hors to freten him. And he, Hercules, slowh Ydra the serpent, and brende the venim. And Achelous the flood, defouled in his forhed, dreynte his shamefast visage in his strondes; this is to seyn, that Achelous coude transfigure himself into dyverse lyknesses; and, as

DE CONSOLATIONE PHILOSOPHIE. BOOK V. PROSE I.

Dixerat, orationisque cursum.

HE hadde seyde, and torned the cours of hir resoun to some othere thinges to ben treted and to ben ysped. Thanne seyde I: Certes, rightful is thynamonestinge and ful digne by auctoritee. But that thou seidest whylom, that the question of the divyne purviaunce is enlaced with many other questionis, I understonde wel and proeve it by the same thing. But I axe yif that thou weneest that hap be any thing in any weys; and, yif thou weneest that hap be any thing, what is it? Thanne quod she, I haste me to yilden and assoilen to thee the dette of my bihest, and to shewen and open the wey, by which wey thou mayst come ayein to thy contree. But albeit so that the thinges which that thou axest ben right profitable to knowe, yit ben they diverse somewhat fro the path of my purpos; and it is to douten that thou ne be maked wery by misweyes, so that thou ne mayst nat suffyce to mesuren the right wey.

Edoute thee therof nothing, quod I. for, for to knowen thilke thinges togidere, in the whiche thinges I

he faught with Hercules, at the laste he tornede him into a bole; and Hercules brak of oon of his hornes, and he, for shame, caste adoun Antheus the gyaunt in the strondes of Libie; & Cacus apaysede the wratthes of Evander; this is to seyn, that Hercules slowh the monstre Cacus, that apaysede with that deeth the wratthe of with scomes the shuldres of Hercules, the sholde thriste. And the laste of his labours was, that he sustened the hevne upon his nekke unbowed; & he deservede eftsones the hevne, to ben the prys of his laste traivale.

ECH now thanne, ye stronge men, theras the heye wey of the grete ensaumple ledeth yow. Onyce men, why nake ye youre bakkes? As who seyth: O ye slowe and delicat men, why flee ye adversitees, and ne fighten nat ayeins hem by vertu, to winnen the mede of the hevne? for the erthe, overcomen, yeveth the sterres; this is to seyn, that, when that erthely lust is overcomen, a man is maked worthy to the hevne.

delyte me greetly, that shal ben to me in stede of reste; sin it is nat to douten of the thinges folwinge, when every syde of thy disputacioun shal ben stedefast to me by undoutous feith.

THANNE seyde she: That manere wol I don thee; & bigan to speken right thus. Certes, quod she, yif any wight diffinishe hap in this manere, that is to seyn, that hap is bitydinge ybrought forth by foolish moevinge and by no knettinge of causes, I conferme that hap nis right naught in no wyse; and I deme aloutrely that hap nis, ne dwelleth but a voice, as who seith, but an ydel word, withouten any significacioun of thing submitted to that vois. for what place mighte ben left, or dwellinge, to folwe and to disordenaunce, sin that God ledeth and constraineth alle thinges by ordre? for this sentence is verray & sooth, that Nothing ne hath his beinge of naught; to the whiche sentence none of these olde folk ne withseyde never; albeit so that they ne understoden ne meneden it naught by God, prince and beginnere of werkinge, but they casten it as a manere foundement of subject material, that is to seyn, of the nature of alle resoun. And yif that any thing is woxen or comen of no causes, than shal it seme that thilke thing is comen or woxen

of naught; but yif this ne may nat ben don, thanne is it nat possible, that hap be any swich thing as I have diffinisshed a lile heer bifore. How shal it thanne be? quod I. Nis ther thanne nothing that by right may be cleped either hap or elles aventure of fortune; or is ther aught, albeit so that it is hid fro the peple, to which these wordes ben covenable? Myn Aristotulis, quod she, in the book of his Phisik, diffinissheth this thing by short resoun, & neigh to the sothe. In which manere? quod I.

As ofte, quod she, as men doon any thing for grace of any other thing, and another thing than thilke thing that men entenden to don bitydeth by some causes, it is cleped hap. Right as a man dalf the erthe by cause of tilyinge of the feeld, and founde ther a gobet of gold bi dolven, thanne wenen folk that it is bifalle by fortunous bitydinge. But, for sothe, it nis nat of naught, for it hath his propre causes; of whiche causes the cours unforeseyn & unwar semeth to han maked hap. for yif the tilyere of the feeld ne dolve nat in the erthe, and yif the hyder of the gold ne hadde hid the gold in thilke place, the gold ne hadde nat been founde. Thise ben thanne the causes of the abregginge of fortuit hap, the whiche abregginge of fortuit hap comth of causes encountringe and flowinge togidere to hemself, and nat by the entencion of the doer. for neither the hyder of the gold ne the deliver of the feeld ne understoden nat that the gold sholde han been founde; but, as I sayde, it bitidde and ran togidere that he dalf theras that other hadde hid the gold. Now may I thus diffinishe hap. Hap is an unwar bitydinge of causes assembled in thinges that ben don for som other thing. But thilke ordre, proceedinge by an uneschuable bindinge togidere, which that descendeth fro the welle of purviaunce that ordeineth alle thinges in hir places and in hir tymes, maketh that the causes rennen and assemblen togidere.

*Metre I.
Rupis Achemenie scopulis, ubi versa sequentum.*

RIGRIS & Eufrates resoven and springen of oo welle, in the cragges of the roche of the contree of Achemenie, theras the fleinge bataile flecheth hir dartes, retorned in the brestes of hem that folwen hem. And some after the same riveres, Tigris & Eufrates, unjoinen and departen hir wateres. And yif they comen togideres, and ben assembled and cleped togidere into o cours, thanne moten thilke thinges fleten togidere.

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dere which that the water of the entrechaunginge flood bringeth. Theshippes & the stolkes arraced with the flood moten assemblen; & the wateres ymedled wrapeth or implyeth many fortunel happes or maneres; the whiche wandringe happes, natheles, thilke declyninge lownesse of the erthe and the flowinge ordre of the slydinge water governeth. Right so fortune, that semeth as that it fleteth with slaked or ungovernede brydles, it suffereth brydles, that is to seyn, to be governed, and passeth by thilke lawe, that is to seyn, by thilke divyne ordenaunce.

*Prose II.
Animadverto, inquam.*

IS understonde I wel, quod I, and I acorde wel that it is right as thou seyst. But I axe yif ther be any libertee of free wil in this ordre of causes that clyven thus togidere in hemself; or elles I wolde

witen yif that the destinal cheyne constraineth the movinges of the corages of men?

IS, quod she; ther is libertee of free wil. Ne ther ne was nevere no nature of resoun that it ne hadde libertee of free wil. for every thing that may naturely usen resoun, it hath doom by which it decerneth & demeth every thing; thanne knoweth it, by itself, thinges that ben to fleen and thinges that ben to desiren. And thilke thing that any wight demeth to ben desired, that axeth or desireth he; & fleeth thilke thing that he troweth ben to fleen. Wherefore in alle thinges that resoun is, in hem also is libertee of willinge and of nillinge. But I ne ordeyne nat, as who seyth, I ne graunte nat, that this libertee be evene lyk in alle thinges. forwhy in the sovereynes devynes substauces, that is to seyn, in spirits, jugement is more cleer, and wil nat ycorumped, and might redy to speden thinges that ben desired. But the soules of men moten nedes be more free when they loken hem in the speculacioun or lookinge of the devyne thought, and lasse free when they slyden into the bodies; and yit lasse free when they ben gadered togidere & comprehended in erthely membres. But the laste servage is when that they ben yeven to vyces, & han yfalle from the possession of hir propre resoun. for after that they han cast away hir eyen fro the light of the sovereyn soothfastnesse to lowe thinges and derke, anon they derken by the cloude of ignoraunce & ben troubled by felonous talents; to the whiche tal-

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ents when they aprochen and asenten, they hepen & encreasen the servage which they han joyned to himself; and in this manere they ben caitifs fro hir propre libertee. The whiche thinges, nathelesse, the lokinge of the devyne purviaunce seeth, that alle thinges biholdeth and seeth fro eterne, & ordeineth hem everich in hir merites as they ben predestinat: & it is seyde in Greek, that Alle thinges he seeth and alle thinges he hereth.

Metre II.

Puro clarum lumine Phebum.

HOMER WITH THE hony mouth, that is to seyn, Homer with the swete ditees, singeth, that the sonne is cleer by pure light; nathelesse yit ne may it nat, by the infirme light of his bemes, breken or percen the inwarde entrailes of the erthe, or elles of the see. So ne seeth nat God, maker of the grete world: to him, that loketh alle thinges from an heigh, ne withstondeth nat no thinges by hevynesse of erthe; ne the night ne withstondeth nat to him by the blake cloudes. Thilke God seeth, in oostrok of thought, alle thinges that ben, or weren, or sholde comen; & thilke God, for he loketh & seeth alle thinges alone, thou mayst seyn that he is the verray sonne.

Prose III.

Tum ego, en, inquam.

THANNE SEYDE I, NOW AM I confounded by a more hard doute than I was. What doute is that? quod she. For certes, I conjecte now by whiche thinges thou art troubled.

IC semeth, quod I, to repugnen & to contrarien greetly, that God knoweth biforn alle thinges, and that ther is any freedom of libertee. For yif so be that God loketh alle thinges biforn, ne God ne may nat ben desseived in no manere, than mot it nedes been, that alle thinges bityden the whiche that the purviaunce of God hath seyn biforn to comen. for which, yif that God knoweth biforn nat only the werkes of men, but also hir conseiles and hir willes, thanne ne shal ther be no libertee of arbitre; ne, certes, ther ne may be noon other dede, ne no wil, but thilke which that the devyne purviaunce, that may nat ben desseived, hath feled biforn. for yif that they mighten wrythen away in othre manere than they ben purveyed, than sholde ther be no stedefast prescience of thing

to comen, but rather an uncertein opinioun, the whiche thing to trowen of God, I deme it felonye and unleveful. Ne I ne provee nat lowe nat, or I ne preye nat, thilke same resoun, by which that sommen wenen that they mowen assoilen and unknitten the knotte of this questioun. for, certes, they seyn that thing nis nat to comen for that the purviaunce of God hath seyn it biforn and that is this: that, for that the thing is to comen, therfore ne may it nat ben hidere this necessitee slydeth ayein into the contrarie partye: ne it ne bihoveth nat, nedes, that thinges bityden that ben purveyed, but it bihoveth, nedes, that thinges that ben to comen ben yporveyed: but as it were ytravailed, as who seyth, that thilke answer procedeth right as thilke travaileden, or weren bisy to enqueren, the whiche thing is cause of the whiche thinges, as, whether the prescience is cause of the necessitee of thinges to comen, or elles that the necessitee of thinges to comen is cause of the purviaunce. But I ne enforce me nat now to shewen it, that the bitydinge of thinges ywist biforn is necessarie, how so or in what manere that the ordre of causes hath itself; althogh that it ne seme nat that the prescience bringe in necessitee of bitydinge to thinges to comen. For certes, yif that any wight sitteth, it bihoveth by necessitee that the opinioun be sooth of him that conjecteth that he sitteth; and ayeinward also is it of the contrarie: yif the opinioun be sooth of any wight for that he sitteth, it bihoveth by necessitee that he sitte. Channe is heer necessitee in that oon and in that other: for in that oon is necessitee of sittinge, and, certes, in that other is necessitee of sooth. But therfore ne sitteth nat a wight, for that the opinioun of the sittinge is sooth; but the opinioun is rather sooth, for that a wight sitteth biforn. And thus, althogh that the cause of the sooth cometh of that other syde (as who seyth, that althogh the cause of sooth cometh of the sittinge, and nat of the trewe opinioun), algates yit is ther comune necessitee in that oon and in that other. Thus sheweth it, that I may make semblable skiles of the purviaunce of God & of thinges to comen. for althogh that, for that thinges ben to comen, therfore ben they purveyed, nat, certes, for that they ben purveyed, therfore ne bityde they nat. Yit natheles, bihoveth it by necessitee, that either the thinges to comen ben ypurveyed of God, or elles that the thinges that ben purveyed of God bityden. And this thing only suffiseth ynough to destroyen the freedom of oure arbitre, that is

to seyn, of oure free wil. But now, certes, sheweth it wel, how fer fro the sothe and how upsoodoun is this thing that we seyn, that the bitydinge of temporel thinges is cause of the eterne prescience. But for to wenen that God purvyeth the thinges to comen for they ben to comen, what othre thing is it but for to wene that thilke thinges that bitidden whylom ben causes of thilke sovereign purviaunce that is in God? And herto I adde yit this thing: that, right as whan that I wot that a thing is, it bihoveth by necessitee that thilke selve thing be; and eek, whan I have knowe that any thing shal bityden, so byhoveth it by necessitee that thilke thing bityde: so foloweth it thanne, that the bitydinge of the thing ywist biforn ne may nat ben eschued. And at the laste, yif that any wight wene a thing to ben othre weyes thanne it is, it is nat only unscience, but it is deceivable opinioun ful diverse and fer fro the sothe of science. Wherefore, yif any thing be so nat certain ne necessarie, who may weten biforn as science ne may nat ben medled with falsnesse (as who seyth, that yif I wot a thing, it ne may nat be false that I ne wot it), right so thilke thing that is conceived by science ne may nat ben non othre weyes than as it is conceived. For that is the cause why that science wanteth lesing (as who seyth, why that witinge ne receiveth nat lesing of that it wot); for it bihoveth, by necessitee, that every thing be right as science comprehendeth it to be. What shal I thanne seyn? In whiche manere knoweth God biforn the thinges to comen, yif they ne be nat certain? for yif that he deme that they ben to comen uneschewably, & so may be that it is possible that they ne shollen nat comen, God is deceived. But nat only to trowen that God is deceived, but for to speke it with mouth, it is a felonous sinne. But yif that God wot that, right so as thinges ben to comen, so shullen they comen... so that he wite egaly, as who seyth, indifferently, that thinges mowen ben doon or elles nat ydoon... what is thilke prescience that ne comprehendeth no certain thing ne stable? Or elles what difference is ther bitwix the prescience & thilke jape-worthy divynninge of Ciresie the divynour, that seyde: Al that I seye, quod he, either it shal be, or elles it shal nat be? Or elles how mochel is worth the devyne prescience more than the opinioun of mankinde, yif so be that it demeth the thinges uncertein, as men doon: of the whiche domes of men the bitydinge nis nat certain? But yif so be that non uncertein thing ne may ben in him that is right certain welle of alle thinges,

thanne is the bitydinge certain of thilke thinges whiche he hath wist biforn ferme ly to comen. for which it foloweth, that the freedom of the conseiles & of the werkes of mankinde nis non, sin that the thought of God, that seeth alle thinges without error of falsnesse, bindeth & constreinet hem to a bitydinge by necessitee. And yif this thing be ones ygraunted and received, that is to seyn, that ther nis no free wille, than sheweth it wel, how greet destruccioun and how grete damages ther folowen of thinges of mankinde. for in ydel ben ther thanne purposed and bihight medes to gode folk, and peynes to badde folk, sin that no moevinge of free corage voluntarie ne hath nat deserved hem, that is to seyn, neither mede ne peyne; and it sholde seme thanne, that thilke thing is alderworst, which that is now demed for aldermost just and most rightful, that is to seyn, that shrewes ben punisshed, or elles that gode folk ben ygerdoned: the whiche folk, sin that hir propre wil ne sent hem nat to that oon ne to that other, that is to seyn, neither to gode ne to harm, but constreinet hem certain necessitee of thinges to comen: thanne ne shollen ther nevere ben, ne nevere weren, vyce ne vertu, but it sholde rather ben confusioun of alle desertes medled withouten discrecioun. And yit ther foloweth another inconvenient, of the whiche ther ne may ben thought no more felonous ne more wikke; and that is this: that, so as the ordre of thinges is yled and comth of the purviaunce of God, ne that nothing nis leveful to the conseiles of mankinde (as who seyth, that men han no power to doon nothing, ne wilne nothing), than foloweth it, that oure vyces ben referred to the maker of alle good (as who seyth, than foloweth it, that God oughte han the blame of oure vyces, sin he constreinet us by necessitee to doon vyces). Channe is ther no resoun to hopen in God, ne for to preyen to God; for what sholde any wight hopen to God, or why sholde he preyen to God, sin that the ordenaunce of destinee, which that ne may nat ben inclyned, knitteth and streineth alle thinges that men may desiren? Channe sholde ther be doon away thilke only allyaunce bitwixen God and men, that is to seyn, to hopen & to preyen. But by the prys of rightwisnesse & of verray mekenesse we deserven the gerdoun of the divyne grace, which that is inestimable, that is to seyn, that it is so greet, that it ne may nat ben ful ypreysed. And this is only the manere, that is to seyn, hope & preyer, for which it semeth that men mowen speke with God, & by resoun of supplicacioun be conjoined to thilke cleermesse, that nis nat aproched no rather or that men beseken it & impetren it. And

Quenam discors federa rerum.

BUT now, whyl the soule is hid in the cloude and in the derkenesse of the membres of the body, it ne hath nat al foryeten itself, but it withholdeth the

somme of thinges, & leseth the singulari-
tees. Thanne, whoso that seeketh singu-
larnesse, he nis in neither nother habite; for
he noot nat al, ne he ne hath nat al forget-
ten: but yit him remembreth the somme of
seil, and rethreteth deplieche thinges yern
biforn, that is to seyn, the grette somme
in his minde: so that he mowe adden the
parties that he hath foryeten to thile that
he hath withholden.

Tum illa: **V**etus, inquit, hec est.

HANNE seide she: this is, quod she, the olde question of the puruiance of God, and Marcus Tullius, whan he deyded the diuynacions, that is to seyn, in his booke that he wroote of diuynacions, hemowede gretly this question; and thou thyself has ysought it mochel, & ouertuly, and longe; but yif ne hath it nat ben determined ne ysped firmly and diligently of any of yow. And the cause of this derkesnes and of this difficulteis, for that the mowinge of the reason of mankinde ne may nat moeven to (that is to seyn, applyn or joinen to) the simplicitie of the deuyne prescience; the whiche simplicitie of the deuyne prescience, yif that men mighten thinke it in any manner, that is to seyn, that yif men mighten thinke & comprehend the thinges as God seeth here, thanne ne sholde ther dwellen ouertuly no dout: the whiche resoun & cause of difficultie I shal assaye at the laste to shewe and to speden, whan I have first yspended & answered to the resouns by which thou art ymooved. For I axe why thou weneest that thilke resouns of hem that assollen this question ne ben nat speedful ynough ne sufficient: the whiche solucoun, or the whiche resoun, for that it demeth that the prescience nis nat cause of necessitee to thinges to comen, than ne weneth it nat that freedom of wil be destorbed or ylet by prescience, for ne drawestow nat arguments from elleswhere of the necessitee of thinges to comen (as who seith, any other wey than thus) but that thilke thinges that the prescience wot bifore ne mowen nat unbityde? That is to seyn, that they moten bityde. But thanne, yif that prescience ne putteth no necessitee to thinges to comen, as thou thyself hast confessed it & bihownen a lital her bifore, what cause or what is it (as who seith, ther may no cause be) by which that the endes volun-tarie of thinges mighten be constraine-

to certain bitydinge? for by grace of po-
sitioun, so that thou mowe the betere un-
derstande this that folweth, I pose, per-
impossible, that ther be no prescience.
Thanne axe I, quod she, in as mochel as
apertieneth to that, sholden thanne thing-
es that comen of free wil ben constrained
to bityden by necessitee? **Bocce.** Nay,

THANNE ayeinward, quod she, I suppose that ther be prescience, but that it ne putteth no necessitee to thinges; thanne trowe I, that thilke selve freedom of wil shal dwellen al hool and absolut & unbounden. But thou wolt seyn that, albeit so that prescience nis nat cause of the necessitee of bitydinge to thinges to comen, algates yit it is a signe that the thinges ben to bityden by necessitee. By this manere thanne, althogh the prescience ne hadde never yben, yit algate or at the leste we yett is certain thing, that the endes and bitydinges of thinges to comen sholden ben necessarie. For every signe sheweth and signifyeth only what the thing is, but it ne maketh nat the thing that it signifyeth. For which it bihoveth first to shewen, that nothing ne bitydeth that it ne bitydeth by necessitee, so that it may appere that the prescience is signe of this necessitee; or elles, yif ther nere no necessitee, certes, thilke prescience ne mighte nat be signe of thing that nis nat. But certes, it is now certain that the proeve of this, yustained by stidefast resoun, ne shal nat ben lad ne proved by signes ne by arguments ytaken fro withoute, but by causes covenable and necessarie. But thou mayest seyn, how may it be that the thinges ne bityden nat that ben ypurveyed to comen? But, certes, right as we trowen that the thinges which that the purviaunce wol bifrom to comen ne ben nat to bityden; but that ne sholden we nat demen; but rather, althogh that they shal bityden, yit ne have they no necessitee of hir kinde to bityden. And this maystow lightly aperceiven by this that I shal seyn. For we seen many thinges whan they ben don bifore oure eyen, right as men seen the cartere worken in the torninge or atempingre or adressing of hise cartes or charietes. And by this manere (as who seith, maystow understonde) of alle othere workmen. Is ther thanne any necessitee, as who seith, in oure loking, that constraineth or compelleth any of thilke thinges to ben don so?

Boece.
HY, quod I; for in ydel and in veyn
were al the effect of craft, yif that
alle thinges weren moeved by con-
streyninge; that is to seyn, by constrein-
inge of oure eyen or of oure sight.

THE thinges thanne, quod she, that when men doon hem, ne han no necessitee. sice that men doon hem, eek the same thinges, first or they ben doon, they ben to comen withoute necessitee. forwhy ther ben somme thinges to bytiden, of which the endes & the bytydinges of hem ben absolut and quit of alle necessitee. for certes, I ne trowe nat that any man wolde seyn this: that tho thinges that men doo now, that they ne weren to bytiden first or they weren ydoon; & thilke same thinges, although that men had ywist hem biforn, yit they han free bytydinges. for right as sciencce of thinges present ne bringeth in no necessitee to thinges that men doo, right so the prescience of thinges to comen ne bringeth in no necessitee to thinges to bytiden. But thou mayst seyn, that of thilke same it is ydouted, as whether that of thilke thinges that ne han non issues & bytydinges necessarys, yif therof may ben any prescience; for certes, they semen to discorden. for thou wenest that, yif that thinges ben yseyn biforn, that necessitee folweth hem; and yif necessitee faileth hem, they ne mighten nat ben wist biforn, & that nothing ne may ben comprehended by science but certain; and yif tho thinges that ne han no certein bytydinges ben purveyed as certein, it sholde ben dirknesse of opinioun, nat soothfastnesse of science. And thou wenest that it be diverse fro the hoolnesse of science that any man sholde deme a thing to ben otherweys thanne it is itself. And the cause of this erroure is, that of alle the thinges that every wight hath yknowe, they wenen that tho thinges been yknowe alonly by the strengthe & by the nature of the thinges that ben ywist or yknowe; & it is al the contrarie. for al that ever is yknowe, it is rather comprehended and known, nat after his strengthe and his nature, but after the facultee, that is to seyn, the power and the nature, of hem that knowen. And, for that this thing shal mowen shewen by a short ensample: the same roundnesse of a body, otherweys the sighte of the eye knoweth it, & otherweys the touchinge. The lokinge by castinge of his bemes, waiteth and seeth from afer al the body togidre, withoute moevinge of itself; but the touchinge clyveth & conjoineth to the rounde body, & moeveth aboute the enviringe, and comprehendeth by parties the roundnesse. And the man himself, otherweys wit biholdeth him, and otherweys imaginacioun, & otherweys reason, & otherweys intelligence. for the wit comprehendeth withoute forth the figure of the body of the man that is established in the matere subject; but the imaginacioun comprehendeth only the figure withoute

themater. Resoun surmounteth imaginacioun, and comprehendeth by universal lookinge the comune spece that is in the singuler peeces. But the eye of intelligence is heere; for it surmounteth the enviroynge of the universitee, and looketh, over that, by pure subtiltee of thoght, thilke same simple forme of man that is perdurably in the divyne thought. In whiche this oughte greatly to ben considered, that the heyeste strengthe to comprehend things enbraseth and contieneth the lowere strengthe; but the lowere strengthe ne aryseth nat in no manere to heere strengthe. for wit ne may nothing comprehend out of mater, ne the imaginacioun ne loketh nat the universels speces, ne resoun taketh nat the simple forme so as intelligence taketh it; but intelligence, that looketh al aboven, whan it hath comprehended the forme, it knoweth & demeth alle the thinges that ben under that forme. But she knoweth hem in thilke manere in the whiche it comprehendeth thilke same simple forme that ne may never ben known to none of that othere; that is to seyn, to none of the three forseide thinges of the sowle. for it knoweth the universitee of resoun, & the figure of the imaginacioun, and the sensible material conceived by wit; ne it ne useth nat nor of resoun ne of imaginacioun ne of wit withouteforth; but it biholdeth alle thinges, so as I shal seye, by a strok of thought formely, withoute discours or collacioun. Certes resoun, whan it looketh anyting universel, it ne useth nat of imaginacioun, nor of witte, & algates yit it comprehendeth the thinges imaginable and sensible; for resoun is she that diffiniseth the universel of hir consayte right thus: man is a resonable twofoted beest. And how so that this knowinge is universel, yet nis ther no wight that ne woot wel that a man is a thing imaginable and sensible; & this same considereth wel resoun; but that nis nat by imaginacioun nor by wit, but it looketh it by a resonable concepcioun. Also imaginacioun, albeit so that it taketh of wit the beginnynges to seen and to formen the figures, algates, althogh that wit ne were nat present, yit it environeth and comprehendeth alle thinges sensible; nat by resoun sensible of deminge, but by resoun imaginatif. Seestow nat thanne that alle the thinges, in knowinge, usen more of hir facultee or of hir power than they doon of the facultee or power of thinges that ben yknowe? Ne that nis nat wrong; for so as every jugement is the dede or doynge of him that demeth, it bihoveth that every wight performe the werk and his entencioun, nat of foreine power, but of his propre power.

Metre IV.
Quondam porticus attulit.

IN the Porche, that is to seyn, a gate of the town of Athenes, theras philosophres hadden en, thilke Porche broughte somtyme olde men, fulderie phres that highten Stoiciens, that wenden that images and sensibillitees, that is to seyn, sensible imaginaciouns, or elles impreinted into sowles fro bodies withouteforth; as who seith, that thilke Stoiciens wenden that the sowle hadde ben naked of itself, as a mirour or a clene parchemin, so that alle figures mosten first comen fro thinges fro withouteforth into sowles, & ben empreinted into sowles: **Text** rightas to sicchen lettres empreinted in the smoothnesse or in the plainnesse of the table of wax or in parchemin that ne hath no figure ne note in it. **Glose.** But now argueth Boecius that opinoun, and seith thus: But yif the thryvinge sowle ne unpleyeth nothing, that is to seyn, ne doth nothing, by his propre moevinges, but suffreth and lyth subgit to the figures and to the notes of bodies withouteforth, and yildeth images ydel and veyn in the manere of a mirour, whennes thryveth thanne or whennes comth thilke knowinge in our sowle, that discerneth & biholdeth alle thinges? And whennes is thilke strengthe that biholdeth the singuler thinges; or whennes is the strengthe that devyde thinges yknowe; & thilke strengthe that gadereth togidre the thinges devyded; and the strengthe that cheseth his entrechaunged wey? for somtyme it heveth up the heved, that is to seyn, that it heveth up the entencioun to right heye thinges; & somtyme it descendeth into right lowe thinges. And whan it retorneth into himself, it reprooveth & destroyeth the false thinges by the trewe thinges. Certes, this strengthe is cause more efficient, and mochel more mighty to seen & to knowe thinges, than thilke cause that suffreth and receiveth the notes and the figures impressed in maner of mater. Algates the passioun, that is to seyn, the suffraunce or the wit, in the quike body, goth biforn, excitinge and moevinge the strengthes of the thought. Right so as whan that cleernesse smyteth the eyen & moeveth hem to seen, or right so as vois or soun hurteleth to the eres and commooveth hem to herkne, than is the strengthe of the thought ymooved and excited, and clepeth forth, to semblable moevinges, the speces that it halt withinne itself; and addeth the speces to the notes and to the

thinges withouteforth, and medleth the images of thinges withouteforth to the formes yhidde withinne himself.

Prose V.
Quod si in corporibus sentiendis.

WHAT yif that in bodies to ben feled, that is to seyn, in the takinge of knowleching of bodily thinges, and albeit so that the qualitees of bodies, that ben objecte fro withouteforth, moeven & entalen the instruments of the wittes; and albeit so that the passioun of the body, that is to seyn, the wit or the suffraunce, goth to form the strengthe of the workinge corage, the which passioun or suffraunce clepeth forth the dede of the thought in himself, and moeveth and exciteth in this mene whyle the formes that resten withouteforth; and yif that, in sensible bodies, as I have seyd, our corage nis nat ytaught or empreinted by passioun to knowe these thinges, but demeth and knoweth, of his owne strengthe, the passioun or suffraunce subject to the body: moche more thanne the thinges that ben absolut and quite fro alle talents or affectiouns of bodies, as God or his aungeles, ne folwen nat in discerninge thinges objecte fro withouteforth, but they accomplisshen and speden the dede of hir thoght. By this resoun thanne ther comen many maner knowinges to dyverse and differinge substaunces. for the wit of the body, the whiche wit is naked and despoiled of alle other knowinges, thilke wit comth to beestes that ne mowen nat moeven hemself her and ther, as oystres and muscules, and other swiche shellefish of the see, that clyven and ben norished to roches. But the imaginacioun comth to remuable beestes, that semen to han talent to fleen or to desiren any thing. But resoun is alonly to the linage of mankinde, right as intelligence is only to the devyne nature: of which it folweth, that thilke knowinge is more worth than these othere, sin it knoweth by his propre nature nat only his subject, as who seith, it ne knoweth nat alonly that apertieneth properly to his knowinge, but it knoweth the subjects of alle other knowinges. But how shal it thanne be, yif that wit and imaginacioun stryven ayein resoninge, & seyn, that of thilke universel thing that resoun weneth to seen, that it nis right naught? for wit & imaginacioun seyn that that, that is sensible or imaginable, it ne may nat be universel. Thanne is either the jugement of resoun sooth, ne that ther nis nothing sensible; or elles, for

that resoun wot wel that many thinges ben subject to wit and to imaginacioun, thanne is the concepcioun of resoun veyn & false, which that loketh & comprehendeth, that that is sensible and singuler as universel. And yif that resoun wolde answeren ayein to these two, that is to seyn, to witte & to imaginacioun, and seyn, that soothly she herself, that is to seyn, resoun, loketh and comprehendeth, by resoun of universalitee, bothe that that is sensible & that that is imaginable; and that thilke two, that is to seyn, wit and imaginacioun, ne mowen nat strecchen ne enhansen hemself to the knowinge of universalitee, for that the knowinge of hem ne may exceden ne surmounte the bodily figures: certes, of the knowinge of thinges, men oughten rather yeven credence to the more stedefast and to the more parfyt jugement. In this maner stryvinge thanne, we that han strengthe of resoninge & of imagininge and of wit, that is to seyn, by resoun and by imaginacioun and by wit, we sholde rather preyse the cause of resoun; as who seith, than the cause of wit and of imaginacioun.

EMBLEME thing is it, that the resoun of mankinde weneth nat that the devyne intelligence biholdeth or knoweth thinges to comen, but right as the resoun of mankinde knoweth hem. for thou arguest and seyst thus: that yif it ne seme nat to men that some thinges han certein & necessarie bitydinges, they ne mowen nat ben wist biforn certeinly to bityden. And thanne is ther no prescience of thilke thinges; and yif we trowe that prescience be in these thinges, thanne is ther nothing that it ne bitydeth by necessitee. But certes, yif we mighten han the jugement of the devyne thoght, as we ben parsoneres of resoun, right so as we han demed that it behoveth that imaginacioun and wit be binethe resoun, right so wolde we demen that it were rightful thing, that mannes resoun oughte to submitten itself and to ben binethe the devyne thoght. for which, yif that we mowen, as who seith, that, yif that we mowen, I counseyle, that we enhance us into the heighte of thilke sovereyn intelligence; for ther shal resoun wel seen that, that it ne may nat biholden in itself. And certes that is this, in what maner the prescience of God seeth alle thinges certains and diffinissed, althogh they ne han no certein issues or bitydinges; ne this is non opinoun, but it is rather the simplicitee of the sovereyn science, that nis nat enclosed nor yshet within none boundes.

THE beestes passen by the
erthes by ful diverse figures.
for som of hem han hir bo-
dies straught and crepen in
the dust, and drawn after
hem a tras or a foruh ycon-
tinued; that is to seyn, as nadres or snakes.
And other beestes, by the wandringe light-
nesse of hir wings, beten the windes, and
over-swimmen the spaces of the longe eyr
by moist fleeinge. And other beestes glad-
en hemself to diggen hir tras or hir step-
pes in the erthe with hir goings or with hir
feet, & to goon either by the grene felde,
or elles to walken under the wodes. And
albeit so that thou seest that they alle dis-
corden by diverse formes, algates hir faces,
enclined, hevieth hir dulle wittes. Only the
linage of man heveth heveste his heye hev-
ed, and stondeth light with his upright
body, and biholdeth the erthes under him.
And, but yif thou, erthely man, wexest
yvel out of thy wit, this figure amonesteth
thee, that axest the hevne with thy righte
visage, and hast areysed thy foreheved, to
beren up aheigh thy corage; so that thy
thought ne benat yhevied ne put lowe under
fote, sin that thy body is so heye areysed.

THERFOR thanne,
as I have shewed a
litel herbiform, that
althing that is ywist
nis nat knownen by
his nature propre,
but by the nature of
hem that compre-
henden it, lat us loke
now, in as moche las

it is leveful to us, as who seith, lat us loke
now as we mowen, which that the estat is
of the devyne substaunce; so that we mow-
en eek knownen what his science is. The
commune jugement of alle creatures re-
sonables thanne is this: that God is eterne.
Lat us considere thanne what is eternitee;
for certes that shal shewen us togidere the
devyne nature and the devyne science.

ETERNITEE, thanne, is parfit pos-
session and algatidere of lyf inter-
minable; and that sheweth more
cleerly by the comparisoun or the colla-
cioun of temporel thinges. for al thing
that liveth in tyme it is present, and pro-
cedeth fro preterits into futures, that is
to seyn, fro tyme passed into tyme com-
inge; ne ther nis nothing establisshed in
tyme that may embracen togider al the
space of his lyf. for certes, yit ne hath it

taken the tyme of tomorwe, and it hath
lost the tyme of yisterday. And certes, in
the lyf of this day, ye ne liven no more, but
right as in the moevable & transitorie mo-
ment. Thanne thilke thing that suffreth
temporel condicioun, althogh that suffreth
bigan to be, ne thogh it never cese for to
be, as Aristotle demed of the world, and
althogh that the lyf of it bestreched with
infinitie of tyme, yit algates nis it no swich
thing that men mighten trowen by right
that it is eterne. for althogh that it com-
prehende and embrace the space of lyf in-
finit, yit algates ne embraceth it nat the
space of the lyf altogider; for it ne hath
nat the futures that ne ben nat yit, ne it ne
hath no lenger the preterits that ben ydoon
or ypassed. But thilke thing thanne, that
hath & comprehendeth togider al the plen-
tee of the lyf interminable, to whom ther
faileth naught of the future, and to whom
ther nis naught of the preterit escaped nor
ypassed, thilke same is ywitnessed and
yprooved by right to be eterne. And it bi-
hoveth by necessitee that thilke thing be
alwey present to himself, and competent
as who seith, alwey present to himself, &
somighty that al be right at his pleasure;
& that he have al present the infinitie of the
moevable tyme. Wherfor som men trowen
wrongfully that, whan they heren that it
semede to Plato that this world ne hadde
never biginninge of tyme, ne that it never
shal han failinge, they wenen in this maner
that this world be made coetene with his
maker; as who seith, they wene that this
world and God ben made togider eterne,
and that is a wrongful weninge. for other
thing is it to ben ylad by lyf interminable,
as Plato graunted to the world, and other
thing is it to embrace togider al the present
of the lyf interminable, the whiche thing
it is cleer and manifest that it is propre to
the devyne thought.

IT ne sholde nat semen to us, that
God is elder thanne thinges that ben
ymaked by quantitee of tyme, but
rather by the propretee of his simple na-
ture. for this ilke infinit moevinge of tem-
porel thinges folweth this presentarie es-
tat of lyf unmoevable; and so as it ne may
nat countrefeten it ne feynen it ne be ewe-
lyke to it for the inmoevabletee, that is
to seyn, that is in the eternitee of God, it
faileth and falleth into moevinge fro the
simplicitee of the presence of God, and
disencreseth into the infinit quantitee of
future and of preterit; and so as it ne may
nat han togider al the plente of the lyf, al-
gates yit, for as moche as it ne ceseth never
for to ben in som maner, it semeth somdel
to us, that it folweth & resembleth thilke
thing that it ne may nat atayne to ne fulfill-
en, and bindeth itself to som maner pre-

sence of this litel and swifte moment: the
whiche presence of this litel & swifte mo-
ment, for that it bereth a maner image or
ywisnesse of the aydwellinge presence of
God, it graunteth, to swiche maner thing-
es as it bitydeth to, that it semeth hem as
thise thinges han yben, and ben.

AND, for that the presence of swich
litel moment ne may nat dwelle,
therfor it ravissed and took the
infinit wey of tyme, that is to seyn, by
successioun; and by this maner is it y-
doon, for that it sholde continue the lyf
in goinge, of the whiche lyf it ne mighte
nat embrace the plente in dwellinge. And
forthy, yif we wollen putten worthynames
to thinges, and folwen Plato, lat us seye
thanne soothly, that God is eterne, & the
world is perpetuel. Thanne, sin that every
jugement knoweth and comprehendeth
by his owne nature thinges that ben sub-
ject unto him, ther is soothly to God, al-
weys, an eterne and presentarie estat; and
the science of him, that overpasseth al
temporel moevement, dwelleth in the sim-
plicitee of his presence, and embraceth
and considereth alle the infinit spaces of
tymes, preterits and futures, and loketh,
in his simple knowinge, alle thinges of
preterit right as they weren ydoon pre-
sently right now. Yif thou wolt thanne
thenken & avyse the prescience, by which
it knoweth alle thinges, thou ne shal nat
demen it as prescience of thinges to com-
en, but thou shalt demen it more right-
fully that it is science of presence or of
instance, that never ne faileth. for which
it is nat ycleped Previdene, but it sholde
rather ben cleped Purviaunce, that is es-
tablisshed ful fro right lowe thinges,
& biholdeth from afer alle thinges, right
as it were fro the heye heighte of thinges.
Why axestow thanne, or why desputestow
thanne, that thilke thinges ben doon
by necessitee whiche that ben yseyn and
knownen by the devyne sighte, sin that,
forsothe, men nemaken nat thilke thinges
necessarie which that they seen ben ydoon
in hir sighte? for addeth thy biholdinge
any necessitee to thilke thinges that thou
biholdest presente? Nay, quod I.

CERTES, thanne, if men mighte
maken any digne comparisoun or
collacioun of the presence devyne
and of the presence of mankinde, right so
as ye seen some thinges in this temporel
present, right so seeth God alle thinges
by his eterne present. Wherfore this de-
vyne prescience ne chaungeth nat the na-
ture ne the propretee of thinges, but bi-
holdeth swiche thinges present to him-
ward as they shullen bityde to yowward
in tyme to comen. Ne it confoundeth nat

the jugement of thinges; but by o sighte
of his thought, he knoweth the thinges
to comen, as wel necessarie as nat neces-
sarie. Right so as whan ye seen togider a
man walken on the erthe and the sonne
arysen in the hevne, albeit so that ye seen
and biholden that oon and that other to-
gider, yit natheles ye demen and discernen
that that oon is voluntarie and that other
necessarie. Right so thanne the devyne
lookinge, biholdinge alle thinges under
him, ne troubleth nat the qualitee of thing-
es that ben certainly present to himward;
but, as to the condicioun of tyme, forsothe,
they ben future, for which it folweth, that
this is noon opinioun, but rather a stede-
fast knowinge, ystrengthened by sooth-
nesse, that, whanne that God knoweth any
thing to be, he ne unwot nat that thilke
thing wanteth necessitee to be; this is to
seyn, that, whan that God knoweth any
thing to bityde, he wot wel that it ne hath
no necessitee to bityde.

AND yif thou seyst heer, that thilke
thing that God seeth to bityde, it
nemaynat unbityde (as who seith,
it mot bityde), and thilke thing that ne
may nat unbityde it mot bityde by neces-
sitee, and that thou streyne me by this
name of necessitee: certes, I wol wel con-
fessen and biknowe a thing of ful sad
trouthe, but unneth shal ther any wight
mowe seen it or come therto, but yif that
he be biholder of the devyne thought, for I
wol answeren thee thus: that thilke thing
that is future, whan it is referred to the
devyne knowinge, thanne is it necessarie;
but certes, whan it is understonden in his
owne kinde, men seen it is outrely free, &
absolut fro alle necessitee.

FOR certes, ther ben two maneres
of necessitee. That oon necessitee
is simple, as thus: that it bihoveth
by necessitee, that alle men be mortal or
deedly. Another necessitee is conditionel,
as thus: yif thou wost that a man walketh,
it bihoveth by necessitee that he walke.
Thilke thing thanne that any wight hath
yknowe to be, it ne may ben non other
weyes thanne he knoweth it to be. But
this condicioun ne draweth nat with hir
thilke necessitee simple. for certes, this
necessitee conditionel, the propre nature
of it ne maketh it nat, but the adjeccioun
of the condicioun maketh it. for no ne-
cessitee ne constreyneth a man to gon,
that goth by his propre wil; albeit so that,
whan he goth, that it is necessarie that he
goth. Right on this same maner thanne,
yif that the purviaunce of God seeth any
thing present, than mot thilke thing ben
by necessitee, althogh that it ne have no
necessitee of his owne nature. But certes,
the futures that bityden by freedom of

arbitre, God seeth hem alle togider present. Thise thinges thanne, yif they ben referred to the devyne sighte, thanne ben they maked necessarie by the condicioun of the devyne knowinge. But certes, yif thilke thinges be considered by hemself, they ben absolut of necessitee, and ne foretlen nat ne cesen nat of the libertee of hir owne nature. Thanne, certes, withoute doute, alle the thinges shollen ben doon which that God wot biforn that they ben to comen. But som of hem comen and bityden of free arbitre or of free wille, that, albeit so that they bityden, yit algates ne lese they nat hir propre nature in beinge; by the which first, or that they weren ydoon, they hadden power nat to han bitid.

Boece. **W**HAT is this to seyn thanne, quod I, that thinges ne ben nat necessarie by hir propre nature, so as they comen in alle maneres in the lyknesse of necessitee by the condicioun of the devyne science?

Philosophie. **T**HIS is the difference, quod she; that tho thinges that I purposede thee a litel heerbiforn, that is to seyn, the sonne arysinge and the man walkinge, that, therwhyles that thilke thinges been ydoon, they ne mighte nat ben undoon; natheles, thatoon of hem, or it was ydoon, it bihoved by necessitee that it was ydoon, but nat that other. Right so is it here, that the thinges that God hath present, withoute doute they shollen been. But som of hem descendeth of the nature of thinges, as the sonne arysinge; and som descendeth of the power of the doeres, as the man walkinge. Thanne seide I no wrong, that yif these thinges ben referred to the devyne knowinge, thanne ben they necessarie; and yif they ben considered by hemself, thanne ben they absolut fro the bond of necessitee. Right so as alle thinges that apereth or sheweth to the wittes, yif thou referre it to resoun, it is universal; and yif thou referre it or loke it to itself, than is it singular. But now, yif thou seyst thus, that yif it be in my power to chaunge my purpos, than shal I voide the purviaunce of God, whan that, peraventure, I shal han chaunged the thinges that he knoweth biforn, thanne shal I answer thee thus. Certes, thou mayst wel chaunge thy purpos; but, for as mochel as the present soothnesse of the devyne purviaunce biholdeth that thou mayst chaunge thy purpos, and whether thou wolt chaunge it or no, & whiderward that thou torne it, thou ne mayst nat eschuen the devyne prescience; right as thou ne mayst nat fleen the sighte of the presente eye, although that thou torne thyself by thy free wil into

dyverse acciouns. But thou mayst seyn ayein: How shal it thanne be? Shal nat the devyne science be chaunged by my disposicioun, whan that I wol o thing now, and now another? And thilke prescience, ne semeth it nat to entrechaunge stoundes of knowinge; as who seith, ne shal it nat seme to us, that the devyne prescience entrechaungeth hise dyverse stoundes of knowinge, so that it knowe sumtyme o thing? No, forsothe, quod I.

Philosophie. **F**OR the devyne sighte renneth to biforn and seeth alle futures, and clepeth hem ayein, and retorneth hem to the presence of his propre knowinge; ne he ne entrechaungeth nat, so as thou weneest, the stoundes of forknowinge, as now this, now that; but he ydelwinge comth biforn, and embraceth at o strook alle thy mutaciouns. And this prescience to comprehend and to seen alle thinges, God ne hath nat taken it of the bitydinge of thinges to come, but of his propre simplicitee. And herby is assouled thilke thing that thou putttest a litel herbiforn, that is to seyn, that it is unworthy thing to seyn, that our futures yeven cause of the science of God. for certes, this strengthe of the devyne science, which that embraceth alle thinges by his presenciarie knowinge, establissheth maner to alle thinges, and it ne oweth naught to latter thinges; and sin that these thinges ben thus, that is to seyn, sin that necessitee nis nat in thinges by the devyne prescience, than is ther freedom of arbitre, that dwelleth hool and unwemmed to mortal men. Ne the lawes ne purposen nat wickedly medes and peynes to the willinges of men that ben unbounden and quite of alle necessitee. And God, biholder & forwiter of alle thinges, dwelleth above; and the present eternitee of his sighte renneth alwey with the dyverse qualitee of oure dedes, despensing & ordeyninge medes to goode men, and torments to wicked men. Ne in ydel ne in veyn ne ben ther nat put in God hope and preyeres, that ne mowen nat ben unspeedful ne withoute effect, whan they ben rightful.

WITHSTOND thanne and eschue thou vyces; worshipec & lovethou virtues; areys thy corage to rightful hopes; yilde thou humble preyeres aheigh. Gret necessitee of promessee & vertu is enchargd & commaunded to yow, yif ye nil nat dissimulen; sin that ye worken and doon, that is to seyn, your dedes or your workes, biforn the eyen of the Juge that seeth and demeth alle thinges. To whom be glorie and worshipec by infinit tymes.

Amen.

THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS. THE PROEM.



HAVE GRET WONDER, BY THIS LIGHTE,
How that I live, for day ne nighte
I may nat slepe wel nigh noght;
I have so many an ydel thoght
Purely for defaute of slepe,
That, by my trouthe, I take kepe
Of nothing, how hit cometh or goth,
Ne me nis nothing leef nor loth.

Al is yliche good to me,
Toye or sorowe, wherso hit be,
For I have feling in nothing,
But, as it were, a mased thing,
Atway in point to falle adoun;
For sory imaginacioun
Is alway hoolly in my minde.

AND wel ye wite, agaynes kinde
Hit were to liven in this wyse;
For nature wolde nat suffyse
To noon erthely creature
Not longe tyme to endure
Withoute slepe, and been in sorwe;
And I ne may, ne night ne morwe,
Slepe; and thus melancolye,
And dreed I have for to dye,
Defaute of slepe, and hevynesse
Hath sleyn my spirit of quiknesse,
That I have lost al lustihede.
Suche fantasies ben in myn hede
So I not what is best to do.

BUT men mighte axe me, why so
I may not slepe, and what me is?
But natheles, who aske this
Leseth his asking trewely.
Myselfen can not telle why
The sooth; but trewely, as I gesse,

I holde hit be a siknesse
That I have suffred this eight yere,
And yet my bote is never the nere;
for ther is phisician but oon,
That may me hele; but that is doon.
Passe we over until eft;
That wil not be, moot nede be left;
Our first matere is good to kepe.

SO whan I saw I might not slepe,
Til now late, this other night,
Upon my bedde I sat upright,
And bad oon reche me a book,
A romaunce, and he hit me took
To rede and dryve the night away;
for me thoghte it better play
Then playen either at chesse or tables.

AND in this boke were writen fables
That clerkes hadde, in old tyme,
And other poets, put in ryme
To rede, and for to be in minde
Whyl men loved the lawe of kinde.
This boke ne spak but of such thinges,
Of quenes lyves, and of kinges,
And many othere thinges smale.
Amonge al this I fond a tale
That me thoughte a wonder thing.

THIS was the tale: Ther was a king
That highte Seys, and hadde a wyf,
The beste that mighte bere lyf;
And this quene highte Alcione.
So hit befel, therafter sone,
This king wolde wenden over see.
To tellen shortly, whan that he
Was in the see, thus in this wyse,
Soche a tempest gan to ryse
That brak hir mast, and made it falle,
And clefte hir ship, and dreinte hem alle,
That never was founden, as it telles,
Bord ne man, ne nothing elles.
Right thus this king Seys loste his lyf.

NOW for to speken of his wyf:
This lady, that was left at home,
Hath wonder, that the king ne come
Hoom, for hit was a longe terme.
Anon her herte gan to erme;
And for that hir thoughte evermo
Hit was not wel he dwelte so,
She longed so after the king
That certes, hit were a pitous thing
To telle hir hertely sorwful lyf
That hadde, alas! this noble wyf;
for him she loved alderbest.
Anon she sente bothe eest and west
To seke him, but they founde nought.

ALAS! quoth she, that I was wrought!
And wher my lord, my love, be deed?
Certes, I nil never ete breed,
I make avowe to my god here,
But I mowe of my lorde here!
Such sorwe this lady to her took
That trewely I, which made this book,
Had swich pite and swich rowthe
To rede hir sorwe, that, by my trowthe,

I ferde the worse al the morwe
After, to thenken on her sorwe.

SO whan she coude here no word
That no man mighte fynde hir lord,
ful oft she swouned, and seide Alas!
for sorwe ful nigh wood she was,
Ne coude she no reed but oon;
But down on knees she sat anon,
And weep, that pite was to here.

MERCY! swete lady dere!
Quod she to Juno, hir goddess;
Help me out of this distresse,
And yeve me grace my lord to see
Sone, or wite wherso he be,
Or how he fareth, or in what wyse,
And I shal make you sacrificyse,
And hoolly youres become I shal
With good wil, body, herte, and al;

And but thou wilt this, lady swete,
Send me grace to slepe, and mete
In my slepe som certeyn sweven,
Wherthrough that I may knowen even
Whether my lord be quik or deed.
With that word she heng down the heed,
And fil aswown as cold as ston;
hir women caughte her up anon,
And broghten hir in bed al naked,
And she, forweped and forwaked,
Was wery, and thus the dede sleep
fil on her, or she toke keep,
Through Juno, that had herd hir bone,
That made hir for to slepe sone;
for as she prayde, so was don,
In dede; for Juno, right anon,
Called thus her messagere
To do her crande, and he com nere.

Whan he was come, she bad him thus:
O bet, quod Juno, to Morpheus,
Thou knowest him wel, the god of sleep;
Now understond wel, and tak keep,
Seys thus on my halfe, that he
Go faste into the grete see,
And bid him that, on alle thing,
He take up Seys body the king,
That lyth ful pale and nothing rody.
Bid him crepe into the body,
And do it goon to Alcione
The quene, ther she lyth alone,
And shewe hir shortly, hit is no nay,
How hit was dreynt this other day;
And do the body speke so
Right as hit was wont to do,
The whyles that hit was on lyve.
Go now faste, and hy thee blyve!

THIS messenger took leve and wente
Upon his weye, and never ne stente
Til he com to the derke valeye
That stant bytwene roches tweye,
Ther never yet grew corn ne gras,
Ne tree, ne nothing that ought was,
Beste, ne man, ne nothing elles,
Save there were a fewe welles
Came renning fro the cliffes adoun,

That made a deedly sleeping soun,
And romnen down right by a cave
That was under a rokke ygrave
Amid the valey, wonder depe.
Ther these goddes laye and slepe,
Morpheus, and Eclympasteyre,
That was the god of sleepes heyre,
That slepe and did non other werk.
This cave was also as derk
As helle pit overal aboute;
They had good leyser for to route
To envye, who might slepe beste;
Some henge hir chin upon hir breste
And slepe upright, hir heed yhed,
And some laye naked in hir bed,
And slepe whyles the dayes laste.
This messenger com fying faste,
And cryed: O ho! awak anon!
Hit was for nocht; ther herde him non.
Awak! quod he, who is, lyth there?
And blew his horn right in hir ere,
And cryed Awaketh! wonder hye.
This god of slepe, with his oon ye
Cast up, axed: Who clepeth there?
Hit am I, quod this messagere;
Juno bad thou shuldest goon,
And tolde him what he shulde doon
As I have told yow heretofore;
Hit is no need reherse hit more;
And wente his wey, whan he had sayd.
Anon this god of slepe abrayd
Out of his slepe, and gan to goon,
And did as he had bede him doon;
Took up the dreynthe body sone,
And bar hit forth to Alcione,
His wyf the quene, theras she lay,
Right even a quarter before day,
And stood right at hir beddes fete,
And called hir, right as she hete,
By name, and seyde: My swete wyf,
Awak! let be your sorwful lyf!
for in your sorwe ther lyth no reed;
for certes, swete, I nam but deed;
Ye shul me never on lyve ysee.
But good swete herte, look that ye
Bury my body, at whiche a tyde
Ye mowe hit finde the see besyde;
And farwel, swete, my wordes blisse!
I praye god your sorwe lisse;
To litel whyl our blisse lasteth!

WITH that hir eyen up she casteth,
And saw nocht: Al! quod she, for sorwe!
And deyed within the thridde morwe.
But what she sayde more in that swow
I may not telle yow as now,
Hit were to longe for to dwelle;
My first matere I wil yow telle,
Wherfor I have told this thing
Of Alcione and Seys the king.

FOR thus moche dar I saye wel,
I had be dolven everydel,
And deed, right through defaute of
sleep,
If I nad red and taken keep
Of this tale next before:
And I wol telle yow wherfore;
for I ne might, for bote ne bale,
Slepe, or I had red this tale
Of this dreynthe Seys the king,
And of the goddes of sleeping.
Whan I had red this tale wel,
And overloked hit everydel,
Me thoughte wonder if hit were so;
for I had never herd speke, or tho,
Of no goddes that coude make
Men for to slepe, ne for to wake;
for I ne knew never god but oon.
And in my game I sayde anon,
And yet me list right evel to pleye:
Rather then that I shulde deye
Through defaute of sleeping thus,
I wolde yive thilke Morpheus,
Or his goddesse, dame Juno,
Or som wight elles, I ne roghte who,
To make me slepe and have som reste;
I wil yive him the alderbeste
Yift that ever he abood his lyve,
And here on warde, right now, as blyve;
If he wol make me slepe a lyte,
Of downe of pure dowwes whyte
I wil yive him a fether-bed,
Rayed with golde, and right wel cled
In fyn blak satin doutremere,
And many a pilow, and every bere
Of clothe of Reynes, to slepe softe;
him thar not nede to turnen ofte.
And I wol yive him al that falles
To a chambre; and al his halles
I wol do peynte with pure golde,
And tapite hem ful many folde
Of oo sute; this shal he have,
If I wiste wher were his cave,
If he can make me slepe sone,
As did the goddesse Alcione.
And thus this ilke god, Morpheus,
May winne of me mo fees thus
Than ever he wan; and to Juno,
That is his goddesse, I shal so do,
I trow that she shal holde her payd.

HADDE unneth that word ysaid
Right thus as I have told hit yow,
That sodeynly, I niste how,
Swich a lust anon me took
To slepe, that right upon my book
I fil aslepe, and therwith even
Me mette so inly swete a sweven,
So wonderful, that never yit
I trowe no man hadde the wit
To conne wel my sweven rede;
No, not Joseph, withoute drede,
Of Egipte, he that redde so
The kinges meting Pharaos,

No more than coude the leste of us;
Ne nat scarsly Macrobeus,
(He that wroot al thavisoun
That he mette, king Scipoun,
The noble man, the Affrican,
Swiche mervayles fortunied than)
I trowe, arede my dremes even.
Lo, thus hit was, this was my sweven.

The Dream.



DE thoughte thus: that hit
was May,
And in the dawning ther I
lay,
Me mette thus, in my bed
al naked:
I loked forth, for I was
waked
With smale foules a gret
hepe,
That had affrayed me out of slepe
Through noyse and swetnesse of hir song;
And, as me mette, they sate among,
Upon my chambre/roof withoute,
Upon the tyles, al aboute,
And songen, everich in his wyse,
The moste solempne servyse
By note, that ever man, I trowe,
Had herd; for som of hem song lowe,
Som hye, and al of oon acorde.
To telle shortly, at oo worde,
Was never yherd so swete a steven,
But hit had be a thing of heven;
So mery a soun, so swete entunes,
That certes, for the toun of Tewnes,
I nolde but I had herd hem singe,
for al my chambre gan to ringe
Through singing of hir armonye.
for instrument nor melodye
Was nowher herd yet half so swete,
Nor of acorde half so mete;
for ther was noon of hem that feyned
To singe, for ech of hem him peyned
To finde out mery crafty notes;
They ne spared not hir throtes.
And, sooth to seyn, my chambre was
ful wel depeynted, and with glas
Were al the windowes wel yglased,
ful clere, and nat an hole ycrased,
That to beholde hit was gret joye.
for hoolly al the storie of Troye
Was in the glasing ywrought thus,
Of Ector and king Priamus,
Of Achilles and Lamedon,
Of Medea and of Jason,
Of Paris, Eleyne, and Lavyne.
And alle the walles with colours fyne
Were peynted, bothe text and glose,
Of al the Romaunce of the Rose.
My windowes weren shet echon,
And through the glas the sunne shon
Upon my bed with brighte bemes,
With many glade gilden streemes;

And eek the welken was so fair,
Blew, bright, clere was the air,
And ful atempre, for sothe, hit was;
for nother cold nor hoot hit nas,
Ne in al the welken was a cloude.

AND as I lay thus, wonder loude
Me thoughte I herde an hunte blowe
Cassaye his horn, and for to knowe
Whether hit were clere or hors of soun.

HERDE goinge, up and doune,
Men, hors, houndes, and other thing;
And al men speken of hunting;
How they wolde slee the hert with strengthe,
And how the hert had, upon lengthe,
So moche embosed, I not now what.
Anon right, whan I herde that,
How they wolde on huntinge goon,
I was right glad, and up anon;
I took my hors, and forth I wente
Out of my chambre; I never stente
Til I com to the feld withoute.
Ther overtook I a gret route
Of hundes and eek of foresteres,
With many relays and lymeres,
And hyed hem to the forest faste,
And I with hem; so at the laste
I asked oon, ladde a lymere:
Say, fellow, who shal huntun here
Quod I; and he answerde ageyn:
Sir, themperour Octovien,
Quod he, and is heer faste by.
A goddess halfe, in good tyme, quod I,
Go we faste! and gan to ryde.
Whan we came to the forest side,
Every man dide, right anon,
As to hunting fil to doon.
The mayster/hunte anon, fot/hoot,
With a gret horne blew three moot
At the uncoupling of his houndes.
Within a whyl the hert yfounde is,
Yhalowed, and rechased faste
Longe tyme; and at the laste,
This hert rused and stal away
fro alle the houndes a prevy way.
The houndes had overshote hem alle,
And were on a defaute yfalle;
Therwith the hunte wonder faste
Blew a forloyn at the laste.

WAS go walked fro my tree,
And as I wente, ther cam by me
A whelp, that fauned me as I stood,
That hadde yfouled, and coude no good.
Hit com and creep to me as lowe,
Right as hit hadde me yknowe,
Hild down his heed and joyned his eres,
And leyde al smothe doun his heres.
I wolde han caught hit, and anon
Hit fledde, and was fro me goon;
And I him folwed, and hit forth wente
Doun by a floury grene wente
ful thikke of gras, ful softe and swete,
With floures fele, faire under fete,
And litel used, hit seemed thus;

for bothe flora and Zephirus,
They two that make floures growe,
Had mad hir dwelling ther, I trowe;
for hit was, on to beholde,
As thogh the erthe envye wolde
To be gayer than the heven,
To have mo floures, swiche seven
As in the welken sterres be.
Hit had forgete the povertie
That winter, through his colde morwes,
Had mad hit suffren, and his sorwes;
Hit was forgotten, and that was sene.
for al the wode was waxen grene,
Swetnesse of dewe had mad it waxe.

IT is no need eek for to axe
Whether ther were many grene greves,
Or thikke of trees, so ful of leves;
And every tree stood by himselve
fro other wel ten foot or twelve.
So grette trees, so huge of strengthe,
Of forty or fifty fadme lengthe,
Clene withoute bough or stikke,
With croppes brode, and eek as thikke,
They were nat an inche asonder,
That hit was shadwe overal under;
And many an hert and many an hinde
Was both before me and bihinde.
Of founes, soures, bukkes, does
Was ful the wode, and many roes,
And many squerelles, that sete
ful hye upon the trees, and ete,
And in hir maner made festes.
Shortly, hit was so ful of beastes,
That thogh Argus, the noble countour,
Sete to rekene in his countour,
And rekene with his figures ten,
for by the figures mowe al ken,
If they be crafty, rekene and noumbre,
And telle of every thing the noumbre,
Yet shulde he fayle to rekene even
The wondres, me mette in my sweven.

AT forth they romed wonder faste
Doun the wode; so at the laste
I was war of a man in blak,
That sat and had yturned his bak
To an oke, an huge tree.
Lord, thoughte I, who may that be?
What ayleth him to sitten here?
Anon right I wente nere;
Than fond I sitte even upright
A wonder wel faringe knight,
By the maner me thoughte so,
Of good mochel, and yong therto,
Of the age of four and twenty yeer.
Upon his berde but litel heer,
And he was clothed al in blakke.
I stalked even unto his bakke,
And ther I stood as stille as ought,
That, sooth to saye, he saw me nought,
for why he heng his heed adoune.
And with a deedly sorwful soun
he made of ryme ten vers or twelve,
Of a compleynt to himselve,

The moste pite, the moste rowthe,
That ever I herde; for, by my trowthe,
Hit was gret wonder that nature
Might suffren any creature
To have swich sorwe, and be not deed.
ful pitous, pale, and nothing reed,
He sayde a lay, a maner song,
Withoute note, withoute song,
And hit was this; for wel I can
Reherse hit; right thus hit began:

HAVE of sorwe so gret woon,
That joye gete I never noon,
Now that I see my lady bright,
Which I have loved with al my might,
Is fro me deed, and is agoon.
Alas, o deeth! what ayleth thee,

That thou noldest have taken me,
Whan that thou toke my lady swete?
That was so fayr, so fresh, so free,
So good, that men may wel ysee
Of al goodnesse she had no mete!

WHAN he had mad thus his complaynte,
His sorowful herte gan faste faynte,
And his spirites wexen dede;
The blood was fled, for pure drede,
Doun to his herte, to make him warm,
for wel hit feled the herte had harm,
To wite eek why hit was adrad
By kinde, and for to make hit glad;
for hit is membre principal
Of the body; and that made al
his hewe chaunge and wexe grene
And pale, for no blood was sene
In no maner tyme of his.

NOON therwith whan I saw this,
He ferde thus evel ther he sete,
I wente and stood right at his fete,
And grette him, but he spak nought,
But argued with his owne thocht,
And in his witte disputed faste
Why and how his lyf might laste;
him thoughte his sorwes were so smerte
And lay so colde upon his herte;
So, through his sorwe and hevvy thocht,
Made him that he ne herde me nought;
for he had wel nigh lost his minde,
Thogh Pan, that men clepe god of kinde,
Were for his sorwes never so wrooth.

AT at the laste, to sayn right sooth,
He was war of me, how I stood
Before him, and dide of myn hood,
And grette him, as I best coude.
Debonairly, and nothing loude,
He sayde: I prey thee, be not wrooth,
I herde thee not, to sayn the sooth,
Ne I saw thee not, sir, trewely.

GOOD sir, no fors, quod I,
I am right sory if I have ought
Destroubled yow out of your thought;
for yive me if I have mistake.

IS, thamendes is light to make,
Quod he, for ther lyth noon therto;
Ther is nothing missayd nor do.

Of how goodly spak this knight,
As it had been another wight;
He made it nouthir tough ne queynte.
And I saw that, and gan me aqueynte
With him, and fond him so trefable,
Right wonder skilful and resonable,
As me thoghte, for al his bale.
Anoon/right I gan finde a tale
To him, to loken wher I might ought
Have more knowing of his thought.
IR, quod I, this game is doon;
I holde that this hert be goon;
Thise huntres conne him nowher see.
I do no fors therof, quod he,
My thought is theron never a del.
Your lord, quod I, I trow yow wel,
Right so me thinketh by your chere.
But, sir, oo thing wol ye here?
Me thinketh, in gret sorwe I yow see;
But certes, good sir, yif that ye
Wolde ought discure me your wo,
I wolde, as wis God helpe me so,
Amende hit, yif I can or may;
Ye mowe preve hit by assay.
for, by my trouthe, to make yow hool,
I wol do al my power hool;
And telleth me of your sorwes smerte,
Paraventure hit may ese your herte,
That semeth ful seke under your syde.
With that he loked on me asyde,
As who sayth, Nay, that wol not be.
Graunt mercy, goode frend, quod he,
I thanke thee that thou woldest so,
But hit may never the rather be do.
No man may my sorwe glade,
That maketh my hewe to falle and fade,
And hath myn understanding lorn,
That me is wo that I was born!
May noght make my sorwes slyde,
Nought the remedies of Ovyde;
Ne Orpheus, god of melodye;
Ne Dedalus, with playes slye;
Ne hele me may phisicien,
Noght Ypocras, ne Galien;
Me is wo that I live houres twelve;
But who so wol assaye himselve
Whether his herte can have pite
Of any sorwe, lat him see me.
I wrecche, that deeth hath mad al naked
Of alle blisse that was ever maked,
Yworthe worste of alle wightes,
That hate my dayes and my nightes;
My lyf, my lustes be me lothe,
for al welfare and I be wrothe.
The pure deeth is so my fo,
Thogh I wolde deye, hit wolde not so;
for whan I folwe hit, hit wol flee;
I wolde have hit, hit nil not me.
This is my payne withoute reed,
Alway deyng, and be not deed,
That Sesiphus, that lyth in helle,
May not of more sorwe telle.
And who so wiste al, by my trouthe,

My sorwe, but he hadde routhe
And pite of my sorwes smerte,
That man hath a feendly herte.
for who so seeth me first on morwe
May seyn, he hath ymet with sorwe;
for I am sorwe and sorwe is I.
ALAS! and I wol telle the why;
My song is turned to pleyning,
And al my laughter to weping,
My glade thoghtes to hevynesse,
In travaile is myn ydelnesse,
And eek my reste; my wele is wo.
My good is harm, and evermo
In wrathe is turned my pleyng,
And my delyt into sorwing.
Myn hele is turned into seeknesse,
In drede is al my sikernesse,
To derke is turned al my light,
My wit is foly, my day is night,
My love is hate, my sleep waking,
My mirthe and meles is fasting,
My countenance is nycete,
And al abayed wherso I be,
My pees, in pleyng and in werre;
Alas! how mighte I fare werre?
Yboldnesse is turned to shame,
for fals fortune hath pleyd a game
Atte ches with me, alas! the why!
The trayteresse fals and ful of gyle,
That al behoteth and nothing halt,
She goth upryght and yet she halt,
That baggeth foule and loketh faire,
The dispitous debonaire,
That scorneth many a creature!
An ydole of fals portraiture
Is she, for she wil sone wryen;
She is the monstres heed ywryen,
As filth over ystrawed with floures;
Hir moste worship and hir flour is
To lyen, for that is hir nature;
Withoute feyth, lawe, or mesure
She is fals; and ever laughinge
With oon eye, and that other wepinge.
That is broght up, she set al doun.
I lykne hir to the scorpioun,
That is a fals flatering beste;
for with his hede he maketh feste,
But al amid his flatering
With his tayle he wol stinge,
And envenyme; and so wol she.
She is thenvyous charite
That is ay fals, and semeth wele,
So turneth she hir false whele
About, for it is nothing stable,
Now by the fyre, now at table;
ful many oon hath she thus yblent.
She is pley of enchaument,
That semeth oon and is nat so,
The false theef! what hath she do,
Trowest thou? by our Lord, I wol thee seye.
Atte ches with me she gan to pleye;
With hir false draughtes divers
She stal on me, and took my fers.

And whan I saw my fers aweye,
Alas! I couthe no lenger pleye,
But seyde, farwel, swete, ywis,
But farwel al that ever ther is!
Therwith fortune seyde Chek here!
And Mate! in mid pointe of the chekhere
With a pounne erraunt, alas!
Ful craftier to pley she was
Than Athalus, that made the game
First of the ches: so was his name.
But God wolde I had ones or twyes
Thoud and knowe the jeopardies
That coude the Grek Pithagores!
I shulde have pleyd the bet at ches,
And kept my fers the bet therby;
And thogh wherto? for trewely
I hold that wish nat worth a stree!
Hit had be never the bet for me.
for fortune can so many a wyle,
Ther be but fewe can hir begyle,
And eek she is the las to blame;
Myself I wolde have do the same,
Before God, hadde I been as she;
She oghte the more excused be.
for this I say yet more therto,
hadde I be God and mighte have do
My wille, whan my fers she caughte,
I wolde have drawe the same draughte.
for, also wis God yive me reste,
I dar wel swere she took the beste!
IT through that draughte I have lorn
My blisse; alas! that I was born!
for evermore, I trowe trewely,
for al my wil, my lust hooly
Is turned; but yet, what to done?
By our Lord, hit is to deye sone;
for nothing I ne leve it noght,
for live and deye right in this thoght.
Ther nis planete in firmament,
Ne in air, ne in erthe, noon element,
That they ne yive me a yift echoon
Of weping, whan I am aloon.
for whan that I awyse me wel,
And bethenke me everydel,
How that ther lyth in rekenyng,
In my sorwe, for nothing;
And how ther leveth no gladnesse
May gladd me of my distresse,
And how I have lost suffisance,
And therto I have no plesance,
Than may I say, I have right noght.
And whan al this falleth in my thoght,
Alas! than am I overcome!
for that is doon is not to come!
I have more sorwe than Tantal.
AND whan I herde him telle this tale
Thus pitously, as I yow telle,
Unnethe mighte I lenger dwelle,
Hit dide myn herte so moche wo.
GOOD sir! quod I, say not so!
I have som pite on your nature;
That formed yow to creature;
Remembre yow of Socrates;

for he ne counted nat three strees
Of noght that fortune coude do.
No, quod he, I can not so.
WHY so? good sir! parde! quod I;
Ne say noght so, for trewely,
Thogh ye had lost the ferses twelve,
And ye for sorwe mordred yourselve,
Ye sholde be dampned in this cas
By as good right as Medea was,
That slow hir children for Jason;
And Phyllis als for Demophon
Heng himself, so weylaway!
for he had broke his terme/day
To come to hir. Another rage
Had Dydo, quene eek of Cartage,
That slow herself, for Eneas
Was fals; al whiche a fool she was!
And Ecquo dyed for Narcisus
Nolde nat love hir; and right thus
Hath many another foly don.
And for Dalida dyed Sampson,
That slow himself with a pilere.
But ther is noon alyve here
Wolde for a fers make this wo!
WHY so? quod he; hit is nat so;
Thou wost ful litel what thou menest;
I have lost more than thou wenest.
Lo, sir, how may that be? quod I;
Good sir, tel me al hooly
In what wyse, how, why, and wherfore
That ye have thus your blisse lorn.
LYTHLY, quod he, com sit adoun;
I telle thee up condicioun
That thou hooly, with al thy wit,
Do thyn entent to herkene hit.
Yis, sir, swere thy trouthe therto.
Gladly, do than holde herto!
I shal right blythly, so God me save,
hooly, with al the witte I have,
Here yow, as wel as I can.
GODDES half! quod he, and began:
Sir, quod he, sith first I couthe
Have any maner wit fro yowthe,
Or kyndely understanding
To comprehend, in any thing,
What love was, in myn owne wit,
Dredeles, I have ever yit
Be tributary, and yiven rente
To love hooly with goode entente,
And through plesance become his thral,
With good wil, body, herte, and al.
Al this I putte in his servage,
As to my lorde, and dide homage;
And ful devoutly prayde him to,
He shulde besette myn herte so,
That it plesance to him were,
And worship to my lady dere.
AND this was longe, and many a yeer
Or that myn herte was set owher,
That I did thus, and niste why;
I trowe hit cam me kindly.
Paraunter I was therto most able
As a whyt wal or a table;

for hit is redy to cacche and take
Al that men wil therein make,
Wherso men wol portreye or peynte,
Be the werkes never so queynte.
AND thilke tyme I ferde so
I was able to have lerned tho,
And to have coud as wel or better,
Paraunter, other art or letter.
But for love cam first in my thought,
Therfore I forgat it nought.
I chees love to my firste craft,
Therfor hit is with me ylast.
forwhy I took hit of so yong age,
That malice hadde my corage
Nat that tyme turned to nothing
Through to mochel knowleching.
for that tyme youthe, my maistresse,
Governed me in ydelnesse;
for hit was in my firste youthe,
And tho ful litel good I couthe;
for al my werkes were flittinge,
And al my thoughtes varyinge;
Al were to me yliche good,
That I knew tho; but thus hit stood.
IT happed that I cam on a day
Into a place, ther I say,
Trewly, the fayrest companye
Of ladies, that ever man with ye
Had seen togedres in oo place.
Shal I clepe hit hap other grace
That broghte me ther? nay, but fortune,
That is to lyen ful comune,
The false trayteresse, pervers,
God wolde I coude clepe hir vers!
for now she worcheth me ful wo,
And I wol telle sone why so.
AMONG these ladies thus echoon,
Soth to seyn, I saw ther oon
That was lyk noon of al the route;
for I dar swere, withoute doute,
That as the someres sonne bright
Is fairer, clerer, and hath more light
That any planete, is in heven,
The mone, or the sterres seven,
for al the worlde, so had she
Surmounted hem alle of beaute,
Of maner and of comlinesse,
Of stature and wel set gladnesse,
Of goodlibede so wel beseye...
Shortly, what shal I more seye?
By God, and by his halwes twelve,
It was my swete, right as herselfe!
She had so stedfast countenance,
So noble port and meyntenance.
And Love, that had herd my bone,
Had espyed me thus gone,
That she ful gone, in my thought,
As helpe me God, so was ycaught
So sodenly, that I ne took
No maner reed but at hir look
And at myn herte; forwhy hir eyen
So gladly, I trow, myn herte seyn,
That purely tho myn owne thought

Seyde hit were bet serve hir for noght
Than with another to be wel.
And hit was sooth, for, everydel,
I wil anoon right telle thee why.
SHALL hir daunce so comlyly,
Carole and singe so swetely,
Laughe and pleye so womanly,
And loke so debonairly,
So goodly speke and so frendly,
That certes, I trow, that evermore
Nas seyn so blisful a tresore,
for every heer upon hir hede,
Soth to seyn, hit was not rede,
Ne nouthur yelw, ne broun hit nas;
Me thoughte, most lyk gold hit was.
And whiche eyen my lady hadde!
Debonair, goode, glade, and sadde,
Simple, of good mochel, noght to wyde;
Cherto hir look nas not asyde,
Ne overthwert, but beset so wel,
Hit drew and took up, everydel,
Alle that on hir gan beholde.
Hir eyen semed anoon she wolde
Have mercy; foolles wenden so;
But hit was never the rather do.
Hit nas no countrefeted thing,
It was hir owne pure loking,
That the goddesse, dame Nature,
Had made hem opene by mesure,
And close; for, were she never so glad,
Hir loking was not foly sprad,
Ne wildely, though that she pleyde;
But ever, me thoughte, hir eyen seyde,
By God, my wrathe is al foryive!
THERWITH hir liste so wel to live,
That dulnesse was of hir adrad,
She nas to sobre ne to glad;
In alle thinges more mesure
Had never, I trowe, creature.
But many oon with hir loke she herte,
And that sat hir ful lyte at herte,
for she knew nothing of hir thoght;
But whether she knew, or knew hit noght,
Algate she ne roghte of hem a stree!
To gete hir love no ner nas he
That woned at home, than he in Inde;
The formest was alway behinde.
But goode folk, over al other,
She loved as man may do his brother;
Of whiche love she was wonder large,
In skilful places that bere charge.
WHICH a visage had she therto!
Alas! myn herte is wonder wo
That I ne can discryven hit!
Me lakketh bothe English and wit
for to undo hit at the fulle;
And eek my spirits be so dulle
So greet a thing for to devyse.
I have no wit that can suffyse
To comprehenden hir beaute;
But thus moche dar I seyn, that she
Was rody, fresh, and lyvely hewed;
And every day hir beautee newed.

And negh hir face was alderbest;
for certes, Nature had swich leat
To make that fair, that trewly she
Was hir cheef patron of beautee,
And cheef ensample of al hir werke,
And moustre; for, be hit never so derke,
Me thinketh I see hir evermo.
And yet moreover, though alle tho
That ever lived were now alyve,
They ne sholde have founde to discryve
In al hir face a wikked signe;
for hit was sad, simple, and benigne.
AND which a goodly softe speche
Had that swete, my lyves lech!
So frendly, and so wel ygrounded,
Up al rescoun so wel yfounded,
And so trefable to alle gode,
That I dar swere by the rode,
Of eloquence was never founde
So swete a sowninge facoude,
Ne trewer tonged, ne scorned lasse,
Ne bet coude hele; that, by the masse
I durste swere, though the pope hit songe,
That ther was never through hir tonge
Man ne woman gretly harmed;
As for hir, ther was al harm hid;
Ne lasse flatering in hir worde,
That purely, hir simple recorde
Was founde as trewe as any bonde,
Or trouthe of any mannes honde.
Ne chyde she coude never a del,
That knoweth al the world ful wel.
BUT swich a fairnesse of a nekke
Had that swete, that boon nor brekke
Nas ther non sene, that mis/sat.
Hit was whyt, smothe, streght, and flat,
Withouten hole; and canel-boon,
As by seming, had she noon.
Hir throte, as I have now memoire,
Semed a round tour of yvoire,
Of good gretnesse, and noght to grete.
AND gode faire Whyte she hete,
That was my lady name right.
She was bothe fair and bright,
She hadde not hir name wrong.
Right faire shuldres, and body long
She hadde, and armes, every lith
fattish, fleshy, not greet therwith;
Right whyte handes, and nayles rede,
Rounde brestes; and of good brede
Hir hippes were, a streight flat bak.
I knew on hir non other lak
That al hir limmes nere sewing,
In as fer as I had knowing.
THERTO she coude so wel pleye,
Than that hir liste, that I dar seye,
That she was lyk to torche bright,
That every man may take of light
Ynogh, and hit hath never the lesse.
Of maner and of comlinesse
Right so ferde my lady dere;
for every wight of hir manere
Might cacche ynogh, if that he wolde,

If he had eyen hir to beholde.
for I dar sweren, if that she
Had among ten thousand be,
She wolde have be, at the leste,
H cheef mirour of al the feste,
Though they had stonden in a rowe,
To mennes eyen that coude have knowe.
for wherso men had pleyd or waked,
Me thoughte the felawship as naked
Withouten hir, that saw I ones,
As a coroune withoute stones.
Trewly she was, to myn ye,
The soleyn fenix of Arabye,
for ther liveth never but oon;
Ne swich as she ne knew I noon.
SPEKE of goodnesse; trewly she
Had as moche debonairte
As ever had Hester in the bible,
And more, if more were possible.
And, soth to seyne, therwithal
She had a wit so general,
So hool enclyned to alle gode,
That al hir wit was set, by the rode,
Withoute malice, upon gladnesse;
Cherto I saw never yet a lesse
Harmful, than she was in doing.
I sey nat that she ne had knowing
What was harm; or elles she
Had coud no good, so thinketh me.
AND trewly, for to speke of trouthe,
But she had had, hit had be routhe.
Therof she had so moche hir del,
And I dar seyn and swere hit wel,
That Trouthe himself, over al and al,
Had chose his maner principal
In hir, that was his resting place.
Cherto she hadde the moste grace,
To have stedfast perseveraunce,
And esy, atempre governaunce,
That ever I knew or wiste yit;
So pure suffraunt was hir wit.
And reson gladly she understood,
Hit folowed wel she coude good.
She used gladly to do wel;
These were hir maners everydel.
THERWITH she loved so wel right,
She wrong do wolde to no wight;
No wight might do hir no shame,
She loved so wel hir owne name.
Hir luste to holde no wight in honde;
Ne, be thou siker, she nolde fonde
To holde no wight in balaunce,
By half word ne by countenance,
But if men wolde upon hir lye;
Ne sende men into Alakye,
To Pruyse and into Tartarye,
To Alisaundre, ne into Turkye,
And bidde him faste, anoon that he
Go hoodles to the drye see,
And come hoom by the Carrenare;
And seye: Sir, be now right ware
That I may of yow here seyn
Worship, or that ye come ageyn!

She ne used no suche knakkes smale.

Wherfor that I telle my tale?
Right on this same, as I have seyde,
Was hoolly al my love leyde;
For certes, she was, that swete wyf,
My suffisaunce, my lust, my lyf,
Myn hap, myn hele, and al my blisse,
My worldes welfare and my lisse,
And I hirs hooly, everydel.

Your Lord, quod I, I trowe yow wel
Hardely, your love was wel beset,
I not how ye mighte have do bet.

Bet? ne no wight so wel quod he.

I trowe hit, sir, quod I, parde!

Nay, leve hit wel! Sir, so do I;

I leve you wel, that trewely

Yow thoghte, that she was the beste,

And to beholde the alderfaireste,

Who so had lokyd with your eyen.

Wherfor? nay, alle that hir seyen

Seyde, and sworn hit was so.

And thogh they ne hadde, I wolde tho

Have loved best my lady fre,

Thogh I had had al the beautee

That ever had Alcipyades,

And al the strengthe of Ercules,

And therto had the worthinesse

Of Hysaundre, and al the richesse

That ever was in Babiloyne,

In Cartage, or in Macedoyne,

Or in Rome, or in Ninive;

And therto also hardy be

As was Ector, so have I joye,

That Achilles slow at Troye,

And therto was he slayn also

In a temple, for bothe two

Were slayn, he and Antilogus,

And so seyth Dares frigus,

for love of hir Polixena,

Or ben as wys as Minerva,

I wolde ever, without drede,

Have loved hir, for I moste nede!

Nede! nay, I gabbe now,

Noght Nede, and I wol telle how,

for of good wille myn herte hit wolde,

And eek to love hir I was holde

As for the fairest and the beste.

She was as good, so have I reste,

As ever was Penelope of Grece,

Or as the noble wyf Lucrece,

That was the beste, he telleth thus,

The Romain Tytus Livius,

She was as good, and nothing lyke,

Thogh hir stories be autentyke;

Algate she was as trewe as she.

Wherfor that I telle thee

Whan I first my lady sey?

I was right yong, the sooth to sey,

And ful gret need I hadde to lerne;

Whan my herte wolde yerne

To love, it was a greet emprise.

But as my wit coude best suffyse,

After my yonge childly wit,

Without drede, I besette hit

To love hir in my beste wyse,

To do hir worship and servyse

That I tho coude, by my trouthe,

Without feynyn outhir slouthe;

for wonder fayn I wolde hir see.

So mochel hit amended me,

That, whan I saw hir first amorwe,

I was warished of al my sorwe

Of al day after, til hit were eve;

Me thoghte nothing mighte me greve,

Were my sorwes never so smerte,

And yet she sit so in myn herte,

That, by my trouthe, I nolde noght,

for al this worlde, out of my thoght

Leve my lady; no, trewly!

When, by my trouthe, sir, quod I,

Me thinketh ye have such a chaunce

As shrift withoute repentaunce.

Repentance? nay fy, quod he;

Shulde I now repente me

To love? nay, certes, than were I wel

Wers than was Achitofel,

Or Anthenor, so have I joye,

The traytour that betrayes Troye,

Or the false Genelon,

He that purchased the treson

Of Rowland and of Oliver,

Nay, why! I am alyve here

Inil foryete hir nevermo.

When, goode sir, quod I right tho,

Ye han wel told me herbefore.

It is no need reherse hit more

How ye sawe hir first, and where;

But wolde ye telle me the manere,

To hir which was your firste speche,

Therof I wolde yow beseche,

And how she knewe first your thoght,

Whether ye loved hir or noght,

And telleth me cek what ye have lore;

I herde yow telle herbefore.

Seyde he, thou nost what thou menest;

I have lost more than thou weneest.

What los is that, sir? quod I tho;

Nil she not love yow? is hit so?

Or have ye oght ydoon amis,

That she hath left yow? is hit this?

for Goddes love, tel me al.

Before God, quod he, and I shal.

I saye right as I have seyde,

On hir was al my love leyde;

And yet she niste hit never a del

Noght longe tyme, leve hit wel.

for be right siker, I durste noght

for al this worlde telle hir my thoght,

Ne I wolde have wratted hir, trewly.

for wostow why? she was lady

Of the body; she had the herte,

And who hath that, may not aterne.

When, for to kepe me fro ydelnesse,

Trewly I did my besinesse

To make songes, as I best coude,

And ofte tyme I song hem loude;

And made songes a gret del,

Althogh I coude not make so wel

Songes, ne knowe the art al,

As coude Lamekes sone Tubal,

That fond out first the art of songe;

for, as his brothers hamers ronge

for, as his anvelt up and down,

Therof he took the firste soun;

But Grekes seyn, Dictagoras,

That he the firste funder was

Of the art; Aurora telleth so,

But therof no fors, of hem two.

Algate songes thus I made

Of my feling, myn herte to glade;

And lo! this was the altherfirste,

I not wher that hit were the werste.

When, hit maketh myn herte light,

Whan I thenke on that swete wight

That is so semely on to see;

And wisse she to God hit might so be,

That she wolde holde me for hir knight,

My lady, that is so fair and bright!

When I have I told thee, sooth to saye,

My firste song. Upon a daye

I bethoghte me what wo

And sorwe that I suffred tho

for hir, and yet she wiste hit noght,

Ne telle hir durste I nat my thoght.

Alas! thoghte I, I can no reed;

And, but I telle hir, I nam but deed;

And if I telle hir, to seye sooth,

I am adred she wol be wrooth;

Alas! what shal I thanne do?

In this debat I was so wo,

Me thoghte myn herte braste atweyn!

So atte laste, soth to seyn,

I me bethoghte that nature

Ne formed never in creature

So moche beaute, trewely,

And bounte, withouten mercy.

In hope of that, my tale I tolde

With sorwe, as that I never sholde,

for nedes; and, maugree my heed,

I moste have told hir or be deed.

I not wel how that I began,

ful evel reherse hit I can;

And eek, as helpe me God withal,

I trowe hit was in the dismal,

That was the ten woundes of Egipte;

for many a word I over-skippe

In my tale, for pure fere

Lest my wordes mis-set were.

With sorweful herte, and woundes dede,

Softe and quaking for pure drede

And shame, and stinting in my tale

for fere, and myn hewe al pale,

ful ofte I wex bothe pale and reed;

Bowing to hir, I heng the heed;

I durste nat ones loke hir on,

for wit, manere, and al was gon.

I seyde Mercy! and no more;

hit nas no game, hit sat me sore.

So atte laste, sooth to seyn,

Whan that myn herte was come ageyn,

To telle shortly al my speche,

With hool herte I gan hir beseche

That she wolde be my lady swete;

And swor, and gan hir hertely hete

Ever to be stedfast and trewe,

And love hir alwey freshly newe,

And never other lady have,

And al hir worship for to save

As I best coude; I swor hir this:

for youres is al that ever ther is

for evermore, myn herte swete!

And never false yow, but I mete,

I nil, as wis God helpe me so!

And whan I had my tale ydo,

God wot, she accounted nat a stree

Of al my tale, so thoghte me.

To telle shortly as hit is,

Trewly hir answer, hit was this;

I can not now wel counterfete

hir wordes, but this was the grete

Of hir answer; she sayde, Nay

Alouterly. Alas! that day

The sorwe I suffred, and the wo!

That trewly Cassandra, that so

Bewayled the destruccioun

Of Troye and of Ilioun,

Had never swich sorwe as I tho.

I durste no more say therto

for pure fere, but stal away;

And thus I lived ful many a day:

That trewly, I hadde no need

ferther than my beddes heed

Never a day to seche sorwe;

I fond hit redy every morwe,

for why I loved hir in no gere.

So hit befel, another yere,

I thoughte ones I wolde fonde

To do hir knowe and understonde

My wo; and she wel understood

That I ne wilned thing but good,

And worship, and to kepe hir name

Over al thing, and drede hir shame,

And was so besy hir to serve;

And pite were I shulde sterve,

Sith that I wilned noon harm, ywis.

So whan my lady knew al this,

My lady yaf me al hoolly

The noble yift of hir mercy,

Saving hir worship, by al weyes;

Dredles, I mene noon other weyes.

And therewith she yaf me a ring;

I trowe hit was the firste thing;

But if myn herte was ywaxe

Glad, that is no need to axe!

As helpe me God, I was as blyve,

Reysed, as fro dethe to lyve,

Of alle happes the alderbeste,

The gladdest and the moste at reste.

for trewly, that swete wight,

Whan I had wrong and she the right,

She wolde alwey so goodely

forve me so debonairly.
In alle my youthe, in alle chaunce,
She took me in hir governaunce.
THERWITH she was alway so trewe,
Our joye was ever yliche newe;
Our hertes wern so even a payre,
That never nas that oon contrayre
To that other, for no wo.
for sothe, yliche they suffred tho
Oo blisse and eek oo sorwe bothe;
Yliche they were bothe gladde and wrothe;
Al was us oon, withoute were.
And thus we lived ful many a yere
So wel, I can nat telle how.
Now! quod he, and stinte anon.
THERWITH he wex as deed as stoon,
And seyde: Alas! that I was bore!
That was the los, that herbefore
I tolde thee, that I had lorn.
Bethenk how I seyde herbeforen,
Thou wost ful litel what thou menest;
I have lost more than thou wenest...
God wot, alas! right that was she!
ALAS! sir, how? what may that be?
She is deed! Nay! Yis, by my
trouthe!

Is that your los? by God, hit is routhe!
AND with that worde, right anon,
They gan to strake forth; al was doon,
for that tyme, the hert-hunting.
WITH that, me thoghte, that this king
Can quickly hoomward for to ryde
Unto a place ther besyde,
Which was from us but a lyte,
A long castel with walles whyte,
By seynt Johan! on a riche hil,
As me mette; but thus it fil.
RIGHT thus me mette, as I yow telle,
That in the castel was a belle,
As hit had smiten houres twelve.
THERWITH I awook myselve,
And fond me lying in my bed;
And the book that I had red,
Of Alecyone and Seys the king,
And of the goddes of sleping,
I fond it in myn honde ful even.
THOGhte I, this is so queynt a sweven,
That I wol, by processe of tyme,
fonde to putte this sweven in ryme
As I can best; and that anon.
This was my sweven; now hit is doon.
Explicit the Boke of the Duchesse.

A TREATISE ON THE ASTROLABE PROLOGUS



LONG IS MY SONE, I HAVE PERCEIVED
wel by certeyne evidences thyn abilitie to lerne
sciencez touchinge noumbres and propor-
ciouns; & as wel considere I thy bisy preyre
in special to lerne the Tretis of the Astrolabie.
Chan, for as mechel as a filosofre seith, he
wrappeth him in his frend, that condescend-
eth to the rightful preyers of his frend, ther-

for have I geven thee a suffisaunt Astrolabie
as for oure orizonte, compowned after the la-
titude of Oxenford; upon which, by media-
cion of this litel tretis, I purpose to teche thee
a certein nombre of conclusions apertening
to the same instrument. I seye a certein of
conclusiouns, for three causes. The furste
cause is this: truste wel that alle the conclu-
siouns that han ben founde, or elles possibly
mighten be founde in so noble an instrument
as an Astrolabie, ben unknowe perfily to any
mortall man in this regioun, as I suppose. An-
other cause is this: that sothly, in any tretis
of the Astrolabie that I have seyn, there ben
some conclusions that wolenat in alle thinges
performen hir bihestes; & some of hem ben
to harde to thy tendre age of ten yere to con-
seyve. This tretis, divided in fyve parties,
wole I shewe thee under ful lighte rewles &
naked wordes in English; for Latin ne canst
ow yit but smal, my lyte sone. But natheles,
suffise to thee thise trewe conclusiouns in
English, as wel as suffyseth to thise noble
clerkes Grekes thise same conclusiouns in
Greek, & to Arabiens in Arabik, and to Jewes
in Ebrew, & to the Latin folk in Latin; whiche
Latin folk han hem furst out of othre diverse

languages, & writen in hir owne tonge, that is to seyn, in Latin. And God wot, that in alle these languages, and in many mo, han these conclusiouns ben suffisauntly lerned & taught, & yit by diverse rewles, right as diverse pathes leden diverse folk the righte way to Rome. Now wol I prey meekly every discret persone that redeth or hereth this litel tretis, to have my rewde endyting for excused, and my superfluite of wordes, for two causes. The firste cause is, for that curious endyting and hard sentence is ful hevy atones for swich a child to lerne. And the seconde cause is this, that sothly me semeth betre to wyrtun unto a child twyes a good sentence, than he forgeit it ones. And Lowis, yif so be that I shewe thee in my lighte English as trewe conclusiouns touching this matere, and naught only as trewe but as many and as subtil conclusiouns as ben shewed in Latin in any comune tretis of the Astrolabe, con me the more thank; and preye God save the king, that is lord of this langage, and alle that him feyth bereth and obeyeth, everech in his degree, the more & the lasse. But considere wel, that I ne usurpe nat to have founde this werk of my labour or of myn engin. Inam but a lewd compilatour of the labour of olde Astrologiens, and have hit translated in myn English only for thy doctrine; & with this swerd shal I seen envye.

I. **T**HE firste partie of this tretis shal rehearse the figures and the membres of thyn Astrolabe, because that thou shalt han the grette knowing of thyn owne instrument.

II. **T**HE second partie shal teche thee werk en the verrey practik of the forseide conclusiouns, as ferforth and as narwe as may be shewed in so smal an instrument portatif aboute. for wel wot every astrologien that smalest fraccions ne wol nat ben shewed in so smal an instrument, as in subtil tables calculated for a cause.

III. **T**HE thridde partie shal contien diverse tables of longitudes and latitudes of sterres fixe for the Astrolabe, & tables of declinations of the sonne, and tables of longitudes of citeez and of townes; and as wel for the governance of a klokke as for to finde the altitude meridian; & many another notable conclusioun, after the kalendres of the reverent clerkes, frere I. Somer and frere N. Lenne.

IV. **T**HE ferthe partie shal ben a theoric to declare the moevinge of the celestial bodies with the causes. The

whiche ferthe partie in special shal shewen a table of the verrey moeving of the more signe, after thyn almenak; upon which table wel the maner of the wyking of that same conclusion, as to knowe in oure orizonte with which degree of the zodiac that the ing of any planete after his latitude fro the ecliptik lyne.

V. **T**HE fiftte partie shal ben an introductory after the statutz of oure a gret part of the general rewles of theoric in astrologie. In which fiftte partie shaltow finde tables of equations of houses after the latitude of Oxenford; and tables of dignetes of planetes, and other notable thinges, yif God wol vouchesauf and his modur the mayde, mo than I beche, &c.

Part I.
Here biginneth the description of the Astrolabe.

I. **T**HE Astrolabe hath a ring to putten on the thombe of thy right hand in taking the heighte of thinges. And tak heed, for from hennesforthward, I wol clepe the heighte of any thing that is taken by thy rewle, the altitude, withoute mo wordes.

2. **T**HIS ring renneth in a maner turet, fast to the moder of thyn Astrolabe, in so rowm a space that hit desturbeth nat the instrument to hangen after his righte centre.

3. **T**HE Moder of thyn Astrolabe is the thikkeste plate, perced with a large hole, that resseyveth in hir wombe the thinne plates compownd for diverse clymatz, and thy riet shapen in manere of a net or of a webbe of a loppe; and for the more declaracioun, lo here the figure.

4. **T**HIS moder is devyded on the bak half with a lyne, that cometh descending fro the ring down to the nethereste bordure. The whiche lyne, fro the forseide ring unto the centre of the large hole amide, is cleped the south lyne, or elles the lyne meridional. And the remenant of this lyne downe to the bordure is cleped the north lyne, or elles the lyne of midnight. And for the more de-

claracioun, lo here the figure.

5. **VERTHWART** THIS forseide longe lyne, ther crosseth him another lyne of the same lengthe from east to west. Of the whiche lyne, from a little croys **H** in the bordure unto the centre of the large hole, is cleped the Est lyne, or elles the lyne Orientale; & the remenant of this lyne fro the forseide **H** unto the bordure, is cleped the West lyne, or the lyne Occidentale. Now hastow here the foure quarters of thyn Astrolabe, devyded after the foure principals plagis or quarters of the firmament. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

6. **T**HE est side of thyn Astrolabe is cleped the right side, and the west side is cleped the left side. forget nat this, litel Lowis. Put the ring of thyn Astrolabe upon the thombe of thy right hand, and thanne wole his right syde be toward thy leftsyde, & his left syde wol be toward thy right syde; tak this rewle general, as wel on the bak as on the wombe side. Upon the ende of this est lyne, as I first seide, is marked a litel **H**, wheras everemo generally is considered the entring of the first degree in which the sonne aryseth. And for the more declaracioun, lo here the figure.

7. **T**RO this litel **H** up to the ende of the lyne meridional, under the ring, shaltow finden the bordure devyded with 90 degrees; and by that same porcioun is every quarter of thyn Astrolabe devyded. Over the whiche degrees ther ben noumbres of augrim, that devyden thilke same degrees fro fyve to fyve, as sheweth by longe strykes bytwene. Of whiche longe strykes the space bytwene contienith a milewey. And every degree of the bordure contieneth foure minutes, that is to seyn, minutes of an houre. And for more declaracioun, lo here the figure.

8. **UNDER** the compas of thilke degrees ben writen the names of the Twelve Signes, as Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricornus, Aquarius, Pisces; and the noumbres of the degrees of the signes ben writen in augrim above, and with longe devisiouns, fro fyve to fyve; devyded fro tyme that the signe entreth unto the laste ende. But understond wel, that these degrees of signes ben everich of hem considered of 60 minutes, and every minute of 60 secondes, and so forth into smale fraccions infinit, as seith Alkabusius. And therfor, know wel, that a degree of the bordure contieneth foure minutes,

and a degree of a signe contieneth 60 minutes, and have this in minde. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

9. **NEXT** this folweth the Cercle of the Dayes, that ben figured in maner of degrees, that contienen in noumbre 365; divyded also with longe strykes fro fyve to fyve, and the noumbres in augrim writen under that cercle. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

10. **NEXT** the Cercle of the Dayes, folweth the Cercle of the names of the Monthes; that is to seyn, Januare, februarye, Marcius, Aprile, Mayus, Juin, Julius, Augustus, Septembre, Octobre, Novembre, Decembre. The names of these monthes were cleped in Arabiens, somme for hir propretees, and some by statutz of lordes, some by other lordes of Rome. Eek of these monthes, as lyked to Julius Cesar and to Cesar Augustus, some were compownd of diverse noumbres of dayes, as Jul and August. **CH**anne hath Januare 31 dayes, februarye 28, March 31, Aprile 30, May 31, Junius 30, Julius 31, Augustus 31, Septembre 30, Octobre 31, Novembre 30, Decembre 31. Natheles, although that Julius Cesar took 2 dayes out of feverer and put hem in his moneth of Juille, and Augustus Cesar cleped the moneth of August after his name, and ordeyned it of 31 dayes, yit truste wel, that the sonne dwelleth therforever the morene lesse in oon signe than in another.

11. **THAN** folwen the names of the Halldayes in the Kalender, and next hem the lettres of the **A**bc. on which they fallen. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

12. **NEXT** the forseide Cercle of the **A**bc., under the cros/lyne, is marked the scale, in maner of two squyres, or elles in maner of laddres, that serveth by hise 12 poyntes and his devisiouns of ful many a subtil conclusioun. Of this forseide scale, fro the cros/lyne unto the verre angle, is cleped umbra versa, and the nether partie is cleped the umbra recta, or elles umbra extensa. And for the more declaracioun, lo here the figure.

13. **HANNE** hastow a brood Rewle, that hath on either ende a square plate perced with a certein holes, some more and some lesse, to resseyven the stremes of the sonne by day, and eek by mediacioun of thyn eye, to knowe the altitude of sterres by nighte. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

14. **T**HANNE is ther a large Dyn, in maner of an extree, that goth thorow the hole, that halt the tables of the clymates and the riet in the wombe of the Moder, thorw which Dyn ther goth a litel wegge which that is cleped The Hors, that streyneth alle thise parties tohepe; this forseide grete Dyn, in maner of an extree, is imagined to be the Pol Artik in thyn Astrolabie. And for the more declaracioun, lo here the figure.

15. **T**HE wombe side of thyn Astrolabie is also devyded with a longe croys in foure quarters from est to west, fro south to north, fro right syde to left syde, as is the bak syde. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

16. **T**HE bordure of which wombe side is devyded fro the poynt of the est lyne unto the poynt of the south lyne under the ring, in 90 degrees; & by that same proporcioun is every quarter devyded as is the bak syde, that amonteth 360 degrees. And understond wel, that degrees of this bordure ben answering and consentrik to the degrees of the Equinoxial, that is devyded in the same nombre as every othere cercle is in the heve hevene. This same bordure is devyded also with 23 lettres capitals and a smal croys above the south lyne, that sheweth the 24 houres equals of the klokke; and, as I have said, 5 of thise degrees maken a mile/vey, and 3 mile/vey maken an houre. And every degree of this bordure conteneth 4 minutes, and every minut 60 secondes; now have I told thee tweye. And for the more declaracioun, lo here the figure.

17. **T**HE plate under thy riet is descryved with 3 principal cercles; of whiche the leste is cleped the cercle of Cancer, bycause that the heved of Cancer turneth evermor consentrik upon the same cercle. In this heved of Cancer is the grettest declinacioun northward of the sonne. And therfor is he cleped the Solsticioun of Somer; whiche declinacioun, aftur Ptholome, is 23 degrees and 50 minutes, as wel in Cancer as in Capricorne. This signe of Cancere is cleped the Tropik of Somer, of tropos, that is to seyn, agaynward; for thanne byginneth the sonne to passe fro usward. And for the more declaracioun, lo here the figure.

18. **T**HE middel cercle in wydensse, of thise 3, is cleped the Cercle Equinoxial; upon whiche turneth evermo the hedes of Aries and Libra. And understond wel, that evermo this Cercle

Equinoxial turneth justly fro verrey est to verrey west; as I have shewed thee in the spere solide. This same cercle is cleped whan the sonne is in the hevedes of Aries and Libra, than ben the dayes & thenyghtes ilke of lengthe in al the world. And therfor ben thise two signes called the Equinoxies. And alle that moeveth within the hevedes of thise Aries & Libra, his moeving is cleped northward; & alle that moeveth withoute thise hevedes, his moeving is cleped southward as fro the equinoxial. Tak kepe of thise latitudes north and south, and forget it nat. By this Cercle Equinoxial ben considered the 24 houres of the klokke; for evermo the arysing of 15 degrees of the equinoxial maketh an houre equal of the klokke. This equinoxial is cleped the girdel of the first moeving, or elles of the angulus primi motus vel primi mobilis. And nota, that firste moeving is cleped Moeving of the firste moevable of the 8 spere, whiche moeving is fro est to west, & eft agayn into est; also it is clepid Girdel of the first moeving, for it departeth the firste moevable, that is to seyn, the spere, in two ilke parties, evene distantz fro the poles of this world. The wydeste of thise three principal cercles is cleped the Cercle of Capricorne, bycause that the heved of Capricorne turneth evermo consentrik upon the same cercle. In the heved of this forseide Capricorne is the grettest declinacioun southward of the sonne, and therfor is it cleped the Solsticioun of Winter. This signe of Capricorne is also cleped the Tropik of Winter, for thanne byginneth the sonne to come agayn to usward. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

18. **U**PON this forseide plate ben compassed certain cercles that highten Almicanteras, of which som of hem semen perfit cercles, and somme semen imperfect. The centre that standith amiddest the narrowest cercle is cleped the Senith; & the netherest cercle, or the firste cercle, is clepid the Orisonte, that is to seyn, the cercle that devyde the two emispheres, that is, the partie of the hevene above the erthe and the partie benethe. Thise Almicanteras ben compowned by two and two, albeit so that on divers Astrolabies some Almicanteras ben devyded by oon, & some by two, and somme by three, after the quantite of the Astrolabie. This forseide senith is imagined to ben the verrey point over the crowne of thyn heved; and also this senith is the verrey pool of the orisonte in every regioun. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

19. **F**ROM this senith, as it semeth, ther come a maner crokede strykes lyke to the clawes of a loppe, or elles like to the werk of a womanes calle, in kerving overthwart the Almicanteras. And thise same strykes or divisious ben cleped Azimut. And they devyden the orisonte of thyn Astrolabie in four and twenty divisious. And thise Azimut serve to knowe the costes of the firmament, and to othere conclusiouns, as for to knowe the cenith of the sonne and of every sterre. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

20. **N**EXT thise azimut, under the Cercle of Cancer, ben ther twelve divisious embelish, moche like to the shap of the azimutes, that shewen the spaces of the houres of planetes; and for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

21. **T**HE Riet of thyn Astrolabie with thy zodiak, shapen in maner of a net or of a loppe/webbe after the olde descriptioun, which thow mayst tornen up and down as thyself lyketh, conteneth certyn nombre of sterres fixes, with hir longitudes and latitudes determinat; yif so be that the makere have nat erred. The names of the sterres ben writen in the margin of the riet theras they sitte; of whiche sterres the smale poynt is cleped the Centre. And understond also that alle sterres sittinge within the zodiak of thyn Astrolabie ben cleped Sterres of the north, for they arysen by north the est lyne. And alle the remenant fixed, out of the zodiak, ben cleped Sterres of the south; but I seynat that they arysen alle by south the est lyne; witnesse on Aldeberan and Algomeysa. Generally understond this rewle, that thilke sterres that ben cleped sterres of the north arysen rather than the degree of hir longitude, & alle the sterres of the south arysen after the degree of hir longitude; this is to seyn, sterres fixed in thyn Astrolabie. The mesure of this longitude of sterres is taken in the lyne ecliptik of hevene, under which lyne, whan that the sonne & the mone ben lyne right or elles in the superfice of this lyne, than is the eclips of the sonne or of the mone; as I shal declare, and eek the cause why. But sothly the Ecliptik Lyne of thy zodiak is the outtereste bordure of thy zodiak, ther the degrees ben marked. Thy zodiak of thyn Astrolabie is shapen as a compas which that conteneth a large brede, as after the quantite of thyn Astrolabie; in ensample that the zodiak in hevene is imagined to ben a superfice contening a latitude of twelve degrees, wheras al the remenant of cercles in the hevene ben im-

aged verrey lynes withoute eny latitude. Amiddest this celestial zodiak ys imaginid a lyne, which that is cleped the Ecliptik Lyne, under which lyne is evermo the wey of the sonne. Thus ben ther six degrees of the zodiak on that on side of the lyne, and six degrees on that other. This zodiak is devyded in twelve principal divisious, that departen the twelve signes. And, for the streitnes of thin Astrolabie, than is every smal divisioun in a signe departid by two degrees and two; I mene degrees contening sixty minutes. And this forseide hevenish zodiak is cleped the Cercle of the Signes, or the Cercle of the Bestes; for zodia in langage of Greek gowneth Bestes in Latin tonge; and in the zodiak ben the twelve signes that han name of bestes; or elles, for whan the sonne entreteth in any of the signes, he taketh the propretee of swich bestes; or elles, for that the sterres that ben there fixed ben disposed in signes of bestes, or shape like bestes; or elles, whan the planetes ben under thilke signes, they causen us by hir influence operaciouns & effectes lyk to the operaciouns of bestes. And understonde also, that whan an hot planete cometh into an hot signe, than encresseth his hete; & yif a planete be cold, thanne amenuseth his coldnesse, bycause of the hote signe. And by this conclusioun maystow take ensample in alle the signes, be they moist or drye, or moeble or fix; rekenyng the qualitee of the planete as I first seide. And everich of thise twelve signes hath respecte to a certein parcellle of the body of a man and hath it in governance; as Aries hath thyn heved, and Taurus thy nekke & thy throte, Gemini thyn armholes & thyn armes, and so forth; as shal be shewed more pleyn in the fifte partie of this tretis. This zodiak, which that is part of the eighte spere, overkerveth the equinoxial; & he overkerveth him again in evene parties; & that on half declineth southward, & that other northward, as pleynly declareth the tretis of the spere. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

22. **T**HANNE hastowa label, that is schapen lyk a rewle, save that it is streit & hath no plates on either ende with holes; but, with the smale point of the forseide label, shaltow calcule thyne equalciouns in the bordure of thin Astrolabie, as by thyn almyry. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

23. **T**HYN Almyry is cleped the Denticle of Capricorne, or elles the Calculer. This same Almyry sit fix in the hed of Capricorne, and it serveth of many

a necessarie conclusioun in equaciouns of
things, as shal be shewed; and for the
more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.
Here endeth the description of the Astro-
labie.

Part II.

Here biginnen the Conclusions of the As-
trolabie.

1. To fynde the degree in which the sonne
is day by day, after hir cours aboute.
(*Hic incipiunt Conclusiones Astrolabii; et
prima est ad inveniendum gradus solis in
quibus singulis diebus secundum cursum
solis existens.*)



REKENE and knowe
which is the day of
thy monthe; and ley
thy rewle up that
same day; & thanne
wol the verray point
of thy rewle sitten
in the bordure, upon
the degree of thy
sonne. Ensample as
thus; the year of oure Lord 1391, the 12
day of March at midday, I wolde knowe
the degree of the sonne. I soughte in the
bak half of myn Astrolabie, and fond the
cercle of the dayes, the which I knowe by
the names of the monthes writen under
the same cercle. Tho leide I my rewle over
this forseide day, & fond the point of my
rewle in the bordure upon the firste degree
of Aries, a litel within the degree; and thus
knowe I this conclusioun. Another day, I
wolde knowe the degree of my sonne, and
this was at midday in the 13 day of Decem-
bre; I fond the day of the monthe in maner
as I seide; tho leide I my rewle upon this
forseide 13 day, and fond the point of my
rewle in the bordure upon the firste degree
of Capricorne, a lite within the degree; and
than hadde I of this conclusioun the ful
experience. And for the more declaracioun,
lo here thy figure.

2. To knowe the altitude of the sonne, or
of othere celestial bodies.
(*De altitudine solis et aliorum corporum
supra celestium.*)



AT the ring of thyn Astrola-
bie upon thy right thombe,
and turne thy lift syde agayn
the light of the sonne. And
remeve thy rewle up & down,
til that the stremes of the
sonne shyne thorgh bothe holes of thy
rewle. Loke thanne how many degrees thy
rewle is areised fro the litel crois upon thyn
est line, and tak ther the altitude of thy
sonne. And in this same wyse maistow
knowe by nighte the altitude of the mone,
or of brighte sterres. This chapitre is so
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general ever in oon, that ther nedith no
more declaracioun; but forget it nat. And for
the more declaracioun, lo here the figure.

3. To knowe every tyme of the day by light
of the sonne, and every tyme of the night
by the sterres fixe, & eke to knowe by night
or by day the degree of any signe that as-
sendeth on the Est Orisonte, which that
is cleped communly the Assendent, or elles
Oruscupum.

(*Ad cognoscendum quodlibet tempus di-
ni per solis indicacionem, et quodlibet tem-
pus noctis per quasdam stellas in celo fixas;
ac etiam ad inveniendum et cognoscen-
dum signum super orizontem qui commu-
niter vocatur ascendens.*)



AK the altitude of the sonne
whan thee list, as I have said;
& set the degree of the sonne,
in cas that it be byform the
middel of the day, among
thyn almikanteras on the est
side of thyn Astrolabie; and yif it be after
the middel of the day, set the degree of
thy sonne upon the west side; tak this
manere of setting for a general rewle, ones
for evere. And whan thou hast set the de-
gree of thy sonne up as many almikanteras
of heyghte as was the altitude of the sonne
taken by thy rewle, ley over thy label, upon
the degree of the sonne; and thanne wol
the point of thy label sitten in the bordure,
upon the verrey tyd of the day. Ensam-
ple as thus; the year of oure Lord 1391, the
12 day of March, I wold knowe the tyd of
the day. I took the altitude of my sonne,
and fond that it was 25 degrees and 30 of
minutes of heyghte in the bordure on the
bak syde. Tho turnede I myn Astrolabie,
and bycause that it was byform midday, I
turnede my riet, & sette the degree of the
sonne, that is to seyn, the 1 degree of Aries,
on the right syde of myn Astrolabie, upon
that 25 degrees & 30 of minutes of heyghte
among myn almikanteras; tho leide I my
label upon the degree of my sonne, & fond
the poynte of my label in the bordure, up-
on a capital lettre that is cleped an X; tho
rekened I alle the capitalles lettres fro the
lyne of midnight unto this forseide lettre
X, and fond that it was 9 of the klokke of
the day. Tho loked I down upon the est
orisonte, and fond ther the 20 degree of
Gemini assending; which that I tok for
myn assendent. And in this wyse hadde I
the experience for evermo in which maner I
sholde knowe the tyd of the day, and eke
myn assendent. Tho wolde I wite the same
night folwing the hour of the night, and
wroughte in this wyse. Among an heep of
sterres fixe, it lyked me for to take the alti-
tude of the feire white sterre that is cleped
Alhabor; and fond hir sitting on the west
side of the lyne of midday, 18 degrees of
heyghte taken by my rewle on the bak syde.
Tho sette I the centre of this Alhabor up-
on 18 degrees among myn almikanteras,
on the west side; bycause that she was
upon the west syde. Tho leide I my
label over the degree of the sonne that was
descended under the weste orisonte, and
risened alle the lettres capitals fro the lyne
of midday unto the point of my label in
the bordure; and fond that it was passed
8 of the klokke the space of 2 degrees. Tho
loked I down upon myn est orisonte, and
fond ther 23 degrees of Libra assending,
whom I tok for myn assendent; and thus
lerned I to knowe ones for ever in which
maner I shuld come to the houre of the
night and to myn assendent; as verreyly
as may be taken by so smal an instrument.
But natheles, in general, wolde I warne thee
for evere, ne mak thee nevere bold to have
take a just assendent by thyn Astrolabie,
or elles to have set justly a klokke, whan
any celestial body by which that thou wen-
est governe thilke thinges ben ney the
south lyne; for trust wel, whan that the
sonne is ney the meridional lyne, the de-
gree of the sonne renneth so longe con-
grentrik upon the almikanteras, that sothly
thou shalt erre fro the just assendent. The
same conclusioun sey I by the centre of
any sterre fix by night; and moreover, by
experience, I wot wel that in oure orisonte,
from 11 of the klokke unto oon of the
klokke, in taking of a just assendent in a
portatif Astrolabie, hit is to hard to knowe.
I mene, from 11 of the klokke bifrom the
houre of noon til oon of the klok next fol-
wing. And for the more declaracioun, lo here
thy figure.

4. Special declaracion of the assendent.
(*Specialis declaracio de ascendente.*)



AS assendent sothly, as wel
in alle nativitez as in ques-
tiouns & elecciouns of tymes,
is a thing which that thise as-
troglogiens gretly observen;
wherfore me semeth conveni-
ent, sin that I speke of the assendent, to
make of it special declaracioun. The as-
sendent sothly, to take it at the largeste,
is thilke degree that assendeth at any of
thise forseide tymes upon the est ori-
sonte; and therefor, yif that any planet
assende at that same tyme in thilke for-
seide degree of his longitude, men seyn
that thilke planete is in horoscopo. But
sothly, the hous of the assendent, that is
to seyn, the firste hous or the est angle, is
a thing more brood and large. for after
the statutz of astrologiens, what celestial
body that is 5 degrees above thilke degree
that assendeth, or within that noumbre,
d d 2

that is to seyn, nere the degree that as-
sendeth, yit rikne they thilke planet in the
assendent. And what planete that is under
thilke degree that assendith the space of
25 degrees, yit seyn they that thilke plan-
ete is lyk to him that is in the hous of the
assendent; but sothly, yif he passe the
bondes of thise forseide spaces, above or
bynethe, they seyn that the planete is fail-
ling fro the assendent. Yit sein thise as-
troglogiens, that the assendent, & eke the
lord of the assendent, may be shapen for
to be fortunat or infortunat, as thus: a
fortunat assendent clepen they whan that
no wykkid planete, as Saturne or Mars, or
elles the Tail of the Dragoun, is in the hous
of the assendent, ne that no wykkid plan-
ete have non aspecte of enemite upon the
assendent; but they wol caste that they
have a fortunat planete in hir assendent
and yit in his felicitie, and than sey they
that it is wel. fortherover, they seyn that
the infortunat of an assendent is the
contrarie of thise forseide thinges. The
lord of the assendent, sey they, that he is
fortunat, whan he is in good place fro the
assendent as in angle; or in a succedent,
wheras he is in his dignitee and confortd
with frendly aspectes of planetes and wel
resceived, and eek that he may seen the as-
sendent, and that he be nat retrograd ne
combust, ne joigned with no shrewe in the
same signe; ne that he be nat in his de-
scencioun, ne joigned with no planete in
his descencioun, ne have upon him non as-
pecte infortunat; and than sey they that
he is wel. Natheles, thise ben observaunce
of judicial matiere and rytes of payens, in
which my spirit ne hath no feith, ne no
knowing of hir horoscopo; for they seyn
that every signe is departed in 3 evene
parties by 10 degrees, and thilke porcioun
they clepe a face. And although that a plan-
ete have a latitude fro the ecliptik, yit sey
some folk, so that the planete aryse in that
same signe with any degree of the forseide
face in which his longitude is rekned, that
yit is the planete in horoscopo, be it in na-
tivite or in eleccioun, &c. And for the more
declaracioun, lo here the figure.

5. To knowe the verrey equacioun of the
degree of the sonne, yif so be that it falle
bytwixe thyn Almikanteras.

(*Ad cognoscendum veram equacionem de
gradu solis, si contigerit fore in duas Al-
mikanteras.*)



AS moche as the almikan-
teras in thyn Astrolabie ben
compounded by two and two,
wheras some almikanteras
in sondry Astrolabies ben
compounded by on and on, or
elles by two and two, it is necessarie to thy
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learning to teche thee first to knowe and worke with thyn owne instrument. Wherefor, whan that the degree of thy sonne falleth bytwix two almikanteras, or elles yif thyn almikanteras ben graven with over gret a point of a compas (for bothe thise thinges may causen errour as wel in knowing of the tyd of the day as of the verrey assendent), thou most werken in this wyse. Set the degree of thy sonne upon the heyer almikanteras of bothe, and waite wel wher as thin almyr toucheth the bordure, and set ther a prikke of inke. Set down agayn the degree of thy sonne upon the nether almikanteras of bothe, and set ther another prikke. Remewe thanne thyn almyr in the bordure evne amiddes bothe prikkes, and this wol lede justly the degree of thy sonne to sitte bytwix bothe almikanteras in his right place. Ley thanne thy label over the degree of thy sonne; and find in the bordure the verrey tyde of the day or of the night. And as verreyly shaltow finde upon thyn est orisonte thyn assendent. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

6. To knowe the spring of the dawing and the ende of the evening, the which ben called the two crepusculis.

(Ad cognoscendum ortum solis et ejus occasum, que vocatur vulgariter crepusculum.)

SET the nadir of thy sonne upon 18 degrees of heighte among thyn almikanteras on the west syde, & ley thy label on the degree of thy sonne, and thanne shal the poynnt of thy label schewe the spring of day. Also set the nadir of thy sonne upon 18 degrees of heighte among thyn almikanteras on the east syde, and ley over thy label upon the degree of the sonne, and with the point of thy label find in the bordure the ende of the evening, that is, verrey night. The nadir of the sonne is thilke degree that is opposit to the degree of the sonne, in the seventh sign, as thus: every degree of Aries by ordre is nadir to every degree of Libra by ordre; and Taurus to Scorpion; Gemini to Sagittare; Cancer to Capricorne; Leo to Aquarie; Virgo to Pisces; and yif any degree in thy zodiak be dirk, his nadir shal declare him. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

7. To knowe the arch of the day, that some folk callen the day artificial, from the sonne arysing til hit go to reste.

(Ad cognoscendum archum diei, quem vulgus vocat diem artificialem, in hoc, ab ortu solis usque ad occasum.)

SET the degree of thy sonne upon thyn est orisonte, & ley thy label on the degree of the sonne, and at the poynnt of thy label in the bordure set a prikke. Turn thanne thy riet aboute til the degree of the sonne sit upon the west orisonte, and ley thy label upon the same degree of the sonne, and at the poynnt of thy label set another prikke. Rekne thanne the quantitee of tyme in the bordure bytwix bothe prikkes, and tak ther thyn ark of the day. The remenant of the bordure under the orisonte is the ark of the night. Thus maistow rekne bothe arches, or every porcion, of whether that thee lyketh. And by this manere of writing maistow see how longe that any sterre fix dwelleth above the erthe, fro tyme that he ryseth til he go to reste. But the day natural, that is to seyn 24 houres, is the voluciuon of the equinoxial with as moche partie of the zodiak as the sonne of his propre moevinge passeth in the mene whyle. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

8. To turn the houres inequales in houres equales.

(Ad convertendum horas inequales in horas equales.)

NOWE the nombre of the degrees in the houres inequales, and departe hem by 15, and tak ther thyn houres equales. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

9. To knowe the quantitee of the day vulgar, that is to seyn, from spring of the day unto verrey night.

(Ad cognoscendum quantitatem diei vulgaris, viz. ab ortu diei usque ad noctem.)

NOWE the quantitee of thy crepusculis, as I have taught in the chapitre biforn, and adde hem to the arch of thy day artificial; and tak ther the space of alle the hole day vulgar, unto verrey night. The same manere maystow worke, to knowe the quantitee of the vulgar night. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

10. To knowe the quantitee of houres inequales by day.

(Ad cognoscendum horas inequales in die.)

UNDERSTOND WEL, that thise houres inequales ben cleped houres of planetes, & understond wel that somtyme ben they lengere by day than by night, and somtyme the contrarie. But understond wel, that evermo, generally, the hour inequal of the

day with the hour inequal of the night contenen 30 degrees of the bordure, whiche bordure is evermo answering to the degrees of the equinoxial; wherfor departe the arch of the day artificial in 12, and tak ther the quantitee of the hour inequal by day. And yif thou abate the quantitee of the hour inequal by daye out of 30, than shal the remenant that levethe performe the hour inequal by night. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

11. To knowe the quantitee of houres equales.

(Ad cognoscendum quantitatem horarum equalium.)

THE quantitee of houres equales, that is to seyn, the houres of the klokke, ben departed by 15 degrees already in the bordure of thyn Astrolabe, as wel by night as by day, generally for ever. What nedeth more declaracioun? Wherefor, whan thee list to know how manye houres of the klokke ben passed, or any part of any of thise houres that ben passed, or elles how manye houres or partie of houres ben to come, fro swich a tyme to swich a tyme, by day or by night, knowe the degree of thy sonne, and ley thy label on it; turne thy riet aboute joyntly with thy label, & with the point of it rekne in the bordure fro the sonne aryse unto the same place ther thou desirest, by day as by night. This conclusioun wol I declare in the laste chapitre of the 4 partie of this tretis so openly, that ther shal lakke no worde that nedeth to the declaracioun. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

12. Special declaracioun of the houres of planetes.

(Specialis declaracio de horis planetarum.)

UNDERSTOND WEL, that evermo, fro the arysing of the sonne til it go to reste, the nadir of the sonne shal shewe the hour of the planete, & fro that tyme forward al the night til the sonne aryse; than shal the verrey degree of the sonne shewe the hour of the planete. Ensamle as thus. The 13 day of March fil upon a Saturday per aventure, and, at the arising of the sonne, I fond the secounde degree of Aries sitting upon myn est orisonte, albeit that it was but lite; than fond I the 2 degree of Libra, nadir of my sonne, dessending on my west orisonte, upon which west orisonte every day generally, at the sonne arise, entreth the hour of any planete, after which planete the day bereth his name; and endeth in the nexte stryk of the plate under the forseide west orisonte; & evere,

as the sonne climbeth uppere and uppere, so goth his nadir downere and downere, teching by swich strykes the houres of planetes by ordre as they sitten in the heavens. The first hour inequal of every Saturday is to Saturne; and the secounde, to Jupiter; the 3, to Mars; the 4, to the Sonne; the 5, to Venus; the 6, to Mercurius; the 7, to the Mone; and thanne agayn, the 8 is to Saturne; the 9, to Jupiter; the 10, to Mars; the 11, to the Sonne; the 12, to Venus; and now is my sonne gon to reste as for that Setterday. Thanne sheweth the verrey degree of the sonne the hour of Mercurie entring under my west orisonte at eve; and next him succedeth the Mone; and so forth by ordre, planete after planete, in hour after hour, al the night longe til the sonne aryse. Now ryseth the sonne that Sunday by the morwe; and the nadir of the sonne, upon the west orisonte, sheweth me the entring of the hour of the forseide sonne. And in this maner succedeth planete under planete, fro Saturne unto the Mone, and fro the Mone up agayn to Saturne, hour after hour generally. And thus knowe I this conclusioun. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

13. To knowe the altitude of the sonne in middes of the day, that is cleped the altitude meridian.

(Ad cognoscendum altitudinem solis in medio diei, que vocatur altitudo meridiana.)

SET the degree of the sonne upon the lyne meridional, & rikene how many degrees of almikanteras ben bytwix thyn est orisonte & the degree of the sonne. And tak ther thyn altitude meridian; this is to seyne, the heyest of the sonne as for that day. So maystow knowe in the same lyne, the heyest cours that any sterre fix climbeth bynight; this is to seyn, that whan any sterre fix is passed the lyne meridional, than byginneth it to descende, and so doth the sonne. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

14. To knowe the degree of the sonne by thy riet, for a maner curiositee, &c.

(Ad cognoscendum gradum solis curiose.)

EK bysily with thy rewle the heyest of the sonne in midde of the day; turne thanne thyn Astrolabe, & with a prikke of ink marke the nombre of that same altitude in the lyne meridional. Turne thanne thy riet aboute til thou fynde a degree of thy zodiak acordyng with the prikke, this is to seyn, sittinge on the prikke; and in sooth, thou shalt finde but two degrees in al the zodiak

of that condicioun; and yit thilke two degrees ben in diverse signes; than maistow lightly by the sesoun of the yere knowe the signe in whiche that is the sonne. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

15. To know which day is lyk to which day as of lengthe, &c.

(Ad cognoscendum quales dies in longitudine sunt similes.)

WHICHE degrees ben ylyke fer fro the hevedes of Cancer and Capricorne; and lok, whan the sonne is in any of thilke degrees, than ben the dayes ylyke of lengthe.

This is to seyn, that as long is that day in that monthe, as was swich a day in swich a month; ther varieth but lite. Also, yif thou take two dayes naturally in the yer ylyke fer fro eyther pointe of the equinoxial in the opposit parties, than as long is the day artificial of that on day as is the night of that othere, and the contrarie. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

16. This chapitre is a maner declaracioun to conclusiouns that folwen.

(Illud capitulum est quedam declaracio ad certas conclusiones sequentes.)

UNDERSTOND wel that thy zodiak is departid in two halfe cerces, as fro the heved of Capricorne unto the heved of Cancer; & agaynward fro the heved of Cancer unto the heved of Capricorne. The heved of Capricorne is the lowest point, wheras the sonne goth in winter; and the heved of Cancer is the heyest point, in whiche the sonne goth in somer. And therfor understond wel, that any two degrees that ben ylyke fer fro any or thise two hevedes, truste wel that thilke two degrees ben of ylyke declinacioun, be it southward or northward; and the dayes of hem ben ylyke of lengthe, and the nightes also; & the shadwes ylyke, and the altitudes ylyke at midday for evere. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

17. To knowe the verrey degree of any maner sterre straunge or unstraunge after his longitude, though he be indeterminat in thyn Astrolabe; sothly to the trowthe, thus he shal be knowe.

(Ad cognoscendum verum gradum alicujus stelle aliene secundum ejus longitudinem, quamvis sit indeterminata in astrolabio: veraciter isto modo.)

TAK the altitude of this sterre whan he is on the est side of the lyne meridional, as ney as thou mayst gesse; & tak an assendent anon right by som maner sterre fix which

that thou knowest; and forget nat the altitude of the firste sterre, ne thyn assendent. And whan that this is don, espye diligently whan this same firste sterre passeth anything the south westward, & hath him anon right in the same nambre of altitude on the west side of this lyne side; and tak a newe assendent anon right by some maner sterre fixe which that thou knowest; and forget nat this secounde rikne thanne how manye degrees ben bytwene the firste assendent and the secounde assendent, & rikne wel the middel degree bytwene bothe assidentes, & set thilke middel degree upon thine orizonte; and waite thanne what degree that sit upon the lyne meridional, & tak ther the verrey stondeh for the tyme, for in the ecliptik is the longitude of a celestial body rekened, evene fro the heved of Aries unto the ende of Pisces. And his latitude is rikned after the quantite of his declinacioun, north or south towarde the poles of this world; as thus. Yif it be of the sonne or of any fix sterre, rekene his latitude or his declinacioun fro the equinoxial cerce; and yif it be of a planete, rekene than the quantite of his latitude fro the ecliptik lyne. Albeit so that fro the equinoxial may the declinacioun or the latitude of any body celestial be rikned, after the site north or south, and after the quantite of his declinacioun. And right so may the latitude or the declinacioun of any body celestial, save only of the sonne, after his site north or south, and after the quantite of his declinacioun, be rekened fro the ecliptik lyne; fro which lyne alle planetes som tyme declynen north or south, save only the forseide sonne. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

18. To knowe the degrees of the longitudes of fixe sterres after that they ben determinat in thyn Astrolabe, yif so be that they ben trewly set.

(Ad cognoscendum gradus longitudinis de stellis fixis que determinantur in astrolabio, sicut in suis locis recte locentur.)

ET the centre of the sterre upon the lyne meridional, & tak keep of thy zodiak, and loke what degree of any signe that sit on the same lyne meridional at that same tyme, & tak the degree in which the sterre standeth; and with that same degree comth that same sterre unto that same lyne fro the orizonte. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

19. To knowe with which degree of the zodiak any sterre fixe in thyn Astrolabe aryseth upon the est orizonte, although his dwelling be in another signe.

(Ad cognoscendum cum quibus gradibus zodiaci que stella fixa in astrolabio ascendit super orizontem orientalem, quamvis ejus statio sit in alio signo.)

SET the centre of the sterre upon the est orizonte, and loke what degree of any signe that sit upon the same orizonte at that same tyme. And understond wel, that with that same degree aryseth that same sterre; and this merveyllous arysing with a strange degree in another signe is by cause that the latitude of the sterre fix is either north or south fro the equinoxial. But sothly, the latitudes of planetes ben comunly rekened fro the ecliptik, because that non of hem declineth but fewe degrees out fro the brede of the zodiak. And tak good keep of this chapitre of arysing of the celestial bodies; for truste wel, that neyther mone ne sterre as in oure embelif orizonte aryseth with that same degree of his longitude, save in o cas; and that is, whan they have no latitude fro the ecliptik lyne. But natheles, som tyme is everiche of thise planetes under the same lyne. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

20. To knowe the declinacioun of any degree in the zodiak fro the equinoxial cerce, &c.

(Ad cognoscendum declinacionem alicujus gradus in zodiaco a circulo equinoctiali.)

SET the degree of any signe upon the lyne meridional, & rikne his altitude in almikanteras fro the est orizonte up to the same degree set in the forseide lyne, and set ther a prikke. Turne up thanne thy riet, and set the heved of Aries or Libra in the same meridional lyne, and set ther another prikke. And whan that this is don, considere the altitudes of hem bothe; for sothly the difference of thilke altitudes is the declinacioun of thilke degree fro the equinoxial. And yif so be that thilke degree be northward fro the equinoxial, than is his declinacioun north; yif it be southward, than is it south. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

21. To knowe for what latitude in any region the almikanteras of any table ben compounded.

(Ad cognoscendum pro qua latitudine in aliqua regione almikantere tabule mee sunt composite.)

WHICHE how manye degrees of almikanteras, in the meridional lyne, be fro the cerce equinoxial unto the senith; or elles fro the pool artik unto the north orizonte; & for so gret a latitude or for so smal a latitude is the table compounded. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

22. To knowe in special the latitude of oure countray, Imene after the latitude of Oxenford, and the heighte of oure pol.

(Ad cognoscendum specialiter latitudinem nostri regionis, scilicet latitudinem Oxonie, et altitudinem poli nostri.)

UNDERSTOND wel, that as fer is the heved of Aries or Libra in the equinoxial from oure orizonte as is the senith from the pole artik; & as hey is the pol artik fro the orizonte, as the equinoxial is fer fro the senith. I prove it thus by the latitude of Oxenford. Understond wel, that the heyghte of oure pool artik fro oure north orizonte is 51 degrees and 50 minutes; than is the senith from oure pool artik 38 degrees and 10 minutes; than is the equinoxial from oure senith 51 degrees and 50 minutes; than is oure south orizonte from oure equinoxial 38 degrees and 10 minutes. Understond wel this reknung. Also forget nat that the senith is 90 degrees of heyghte fro the orizonte, and oure equinoxial is 90 degrees from oure pool artik. Also this shorterewle is soth, that the latitude of any place in a region is the distance fro the senith unto the equinoxial. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

23. To prove evidently the latitude of any place in a region, by the preve of the heyghte of the pol artik in that same place.

(Ad probandum evidenter latitudinem alicujus loci in aliqua regione, per probacionem altitudinis de polo artico in eodem loco.)

IN some winters night, whan the firmament is clere and thikke/sterred, waite a tyme til that any sterre fix sit lyne right perpendicular over the pol artik, & clepe that sterre A. And wayte another sterre that sit lyne right under A, and under the pol, & clepe that sterre f. And understond wel, that f is nat considered but only to declare that A sit evene overe the pool. Tak thanne anon right the altitude of A from the orizonte, and forget it nat. Lat A and f go farwel til agayns the dawening a gret while; & come thanne agayn, and abyd til that A is evene under the pol and under f; for sothly, than wol f sitte over the pool, and A wol sitte

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that thou knowest; and forget nat the altitude of the firste sterre, ne thyn assendent. And whan that this is don, espye diligently whan this same firste sterre passeth anything the south westward, & hath him anon right in the same nambre of altitude on the west side of this lyne side; and tak a newe assendent anon right by some maner sterre fixe which that thou knowest; and forget nat this secounde rikne thanne how manye degrees ben bytwene the firste assendent and the secounde assendent, & rikne wel the middel degree bytwene bothe assidentes, & set thilke middel degree upon thine orizonte; and waite thanne what degree that sit upon the lyne meridional, & tak ther the verrey stondeh for the tyme, for in the ecliptik is the longitude of a celestial body rekened, evene fro the heved of Aries unto the ende of Pisces. And his latitude is rikned after the quantite of his declinacioun, north or south towarde the poles of this world; as thus. Yif it be of the sonne or of any fix sterre, rekene his latitude or his declinacioun fro the equinoxial cerce; and yif it be of a planete, rekene than the quantite of his latitude fro the ecliptik lyne. Albeit so that fro the equinoxial may the declinacioun or the latitude of any body celestial be rikned, after the site north or south, and after the quantite of his declinacioun. And right so may the latitude or the declinacioun of any body celestial, save only of the sonne, after his site north or south, and after the quantite of his declinacioun, be rekened fro the ecliptik lyne; fro which lyne alle planetes som tyme declynen north or south, save only the forseide sonne. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

18. To knowe the degrees of the longitudes of fixe sterres after that they ben determinat in thyn Astrolabe, yif so be that they ben trewly set.

(Ad cognoscendum gradus longitudinis de stellis fixis que determinantur in astrolabio, sicut in suis locis recte locentur.)

ET the centre of the sterre upon the lyne meridional, & tak keep of thy zodiak, and loke what degree of any signe that sit on the same lyne meridional at that same tyme, & tak the degree in which the sterre standeth; and with that same degree comth that same sterre unto that same lyne fro the orizonte. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

19. To knowe with which degree of the zodiak any sterre fixe in thyn Astrolabe aryseth upon the est orizonte, although his dwelling be in another signe.

(Ad cognoscendum cum quibus gradibus zodiaci que stella fixa in astrolabio ascendit super orizontem orientalem, quamvis ejus statio sit in alio signo.)

SET the centre of the sterre upon the est orizonte, and loke what degree of any signe that sit upon the same orizonte at that same tyme. And understond wel, that with that same degree aryseth that same sterre; and this merveyllous arysing with a strange degree in another signe is by cause that the latitude of the sterre fix is either north or south fro the equinoxial. But sothly, the latitudes of planetes ben comunly rekened fro the ecliptik, because that non of hem declineth but fewe degrees out fro the brede of the zodiak. And tak good keep of this chapitre of arysing of the celestial bodies; for truste wel, that neyther mone ne sterre as in oure embelif orizonte aryseth with that same degree of his longitude, save in o cas; and that is, whan they have no latitude fro the ecliptik lyne. But natheles, som tyme is everiche of thise planetes under the same lyne. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

20. To knowe the declinacioun of any degree in the zodiak fro the equinoxial cerce, &c.

(Ad cognoscendum declinacionem alicujus gradus in zodiaco a circulo equinoctiali.)

SET the degree of any signe upon the lyne meridional, & rikne his altitude in almikanteras fro the est orizonte up to the same degree set in the forseide lyne, and set ther a prikke. Turne up thanne thy riet, and set the heved of Aries or Libra in the same meridional lyne, and set ther another prikke. And whan that this is don, considere the altitudes of hem bothe; for sothly the difference of thilke altitudes is the declinacioun of thilke degree fro the equinoxial. And yif so be that thilke degree be northward fro the equinoxial, than is his declinacioun north; yif it be southward, than is it south. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

21. To knowe for what latitude in any region the almikanteras of any table ben compounded.

(Ad cognoscendum pro qua latitudine in aliqua regione almikantere tabule mee sunt composite.)

WHICHE how manye degrees of almikanteras, in the meridional lyne, be fro the cerce equinoxial unto the senith; or elles fro the pool artik unto the north orizonte; & for so gret a latitude or for so smal a latitude is the table compounded. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

22. To knowe in special the latitude of oure countray, Imene after the latitude of Oxenford, and the heighte of oure pol.

(Ad cognoscendum specialiter latitudinem nostri regionis, scilicet latitudinem Oxonie, et altitudinem poli nostri.)

UNDERSTOND wel, that as fer is the heved of Aries or Libra in the equinoxial from oure orizonte as is the senith from the pole artik; & as hey is the pol artik fro the orizonte, as the equinoxial is fer fro the senith. I prove it thus by the latitude of Oxenford. Understond wel, that the heyghte of oure pool artik fro oure north orizonte is 51 degrees and 50 minutes; than is the senith from oure pool artik 38 degrees and 10 minutes; than is the equinoxial from oure senith 51 degrees and 50 minutes; than is oure south orizonte from oure equinoxial 38 degrees and 10 minutes. Understond wel this reknung. Also forget nat that the senith is 90 degrees of heyghte fro the orizonte, and oure equinoxial is 90 degrees from oure pool artik. Also this shorterewle is soth, that the latitude of any place in a region is the distance fro the senith unto the equinoxial. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

23. To prove evidently the latitude of any place in a region, by the preve of the heyghte of the pol artik in that same place.

(Ad probandum evidenter latitudinem alicujus loci in aliqua regione, per probacionem altitudinis de polo artico in eodem loco.)

IN some winters night, whan the firmament is clere and thikke/sterred, waite a tyme til that any sterre fix sit lyne right perpendicular over the pol artik, & clepe that sterre A. And wayte another sterre that sit lyne right under A, and under the pol, & clepe that sterre f. And understond wel, that f is nat considered but only to declare that A sit evene overe the pool. Tak thanne anon right the altitude of A from the orizonte, and forget it nat. Lat A and f go farwel til agayns the dawening a gret while; & come thanne agayn, and abyd til that A is evene under the pol and under f; for sothly, than wol f sitte over the pool, and A wol sitte

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that thou knowest; and forget nat the altitude of the firste sterre, ne thyn assendent. And whan that this is don, espye diligently whan this same firste sterre passeth anything the south westward, & hath him anon right in the same nambre of altitude on the west side of this lyne side; and tak a newe assendent anon right by some maner sterre fixe which that thou knowest; and forget nat this secounde rikne thanne how manye degrees ben bytwene the firste assendent and the secounde assendent, & rikne wel the middel degree bytwene bothe assidentes, & set thilke middel degree upon thine orizonte; and waite thanne what degree that sit upon the lyne meridional, & tak ther the verrey stondeh for the tyme, for in the ecliptik is the longitude of a celestial body rekened, evene fro the heved of Aries unto the ende of Pisces. And his latitude is rikned after the quantite of his declinacioun, north or south towarde the poles of this world; as thus. Yif it be of the sonne or of any fix sterre, rekene his latitude or his declinacioun fro the equinoxial cerce; and yif it be of a planete, rekene than the quantite of his latitude fro the ecliptik lyne. Albeit so that fro the equinoxial may the declinacioun or the latitude of any body celestial be rikned, after the site north or south, and after the quantite of his declinacioun. And right so may the latitude or the declinacioun of any body celestial, save only of the sonne, after his site north or south, and after the quantite of his declinacioun, be rekened fro the ecliptik lyne; fro which lyne alle planetes som tyme declynen north or south, save only the forseide sonne. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

18. To knowe the degrees of the longitudes of fixe sterres after that they ben determinat in thyn Astrolabe, yif so be that they ben trewly set.

(Ad cognoscendum gradus longitudinis de stellis fixis que determinantur in astrolabio, sicut in suis locis recte locentur.)

ET the centre of the sterre upon the lyne meridional, & tak keep of thy zodiak, and loke what degree of any signe that sit on the same lyne meridional at that same tyme, & tak the degree in which the sterre standeth; and with that same degree comth that same sterre unto that same lyne fro the orizonte. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

19. To knowe with which degree of the zodiak any sterre fixe in thyn Astrolabe aryseth upon the est orizonte, although his dwelling be in another signe.

(Ad cognoscendum cum quibus gradibus zodiaci que stella fixa in astrolabio ascendit super orizontem orientalem, quamvis ejus statio sit in alio signo.)

SET the centre of the sterre upon the est orizonte, and loke what degree of any signe that sit upon the same orizonte at that same tyme. And understond wel, that with that same degree aryseth that same sterre; and this merveyllous arysing with a strange degree in another signe is by cause that the latitude of the sterre fix is either north or south fro the equinoxial. But sothly, the latitudes of planetes ben comunly rekened fro the ecliptik, because that non of hem declineth but fewe degrees out fro the brede of the zodiak. And tak good keep of this chapitre of arysing of the celestial bodies; for truste wel, that neyther mone ne sterre as in oure embelif orizonte aryseth with that same degree of his longitude, save in o cas; and that is, whan they have no latitude fro the ecliptik lyne. But natheles, som tyme is everiche of thise planetes under the same lyne. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

20. To knowe the declinacioun of any degree in the zodiak fro the equinoxial cerce, &c.

(Ad cognoscendum declinacionem alicujus gradus in zodiaco a circulo equinoctiali.)

SET the degree of any signe upon the lyne meridional, & rikne his altitude in almikanteras fro the est orizonte up to the same degree set in the forseide lyne, and set ther a prikke. Turne up thanne thy riet, and set the heved of Aries or Libra in the same meridional lyne, and set ther another prikke. And whan that this is don, considere the altitudes of hem bothe; for sothly the difference of thilke altitudes is the declinacioun of thilke degree fro the equinoxial. And yif so be that thilke degree be northward fro the equinoxial, than is his declinacioun north; yif it be southward, than is it south. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

21. To knowe for what latitude in any region the almikanteras of any table ben compounded.

(Ad cognoscendum pro qua latitudine in aliqua regione almikantere tabule mee sunt composite.)

WHICHE how manye degrees of almikanteras, in the meridional lyne, be fro the cerce equinoxial unto the senith; or elles fro the pool artik unto the north orizonte; & for so gret a latitude or for so smal a latitude is the table compounded. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

22. To knowe in special the latitude of oure countray, Imene after the latitude of Oxenford, and the heighte of oure pol.

(Ad cognoscendum specialiter latitudinem nostri regionis, scilicet latitudinem Oxonie, et altitudinem poli nostri.)

UNDERSTOND wel, that as fer is the heved of Aries or Libra in the equinoxial from oure orizonte as is the senith from the pole artik; & as hey is the pol artik fro the orizonte, as the equinoxial is fer fro the senith. I prove it thus by the latitude of Oxenford. Understond wel, that the heyghte of oure pool artik fro oure north orizonte is 51 degrees and 50 minutes; than is the senith from oure pool artik 38 degrees and 10 minutes; than is the equinoxial from oure senith 51 degrees and 50 minutes; than is oure south orizonte from oure equinoxial 38 degrees and 10 minutes. Understond wel this reknung. Also forget nat that the senith is 90 degrees of heyghte fro the orizonte, and oure equinoxial is 90 degrees from oure pool artik. Also this shorterewle is soth, that the latitude of any place in a region is the distance fro the senith unto the equinoxial. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

23. To prove evidently the latitude of any place in a region, by the preve of the heyghte of the pol artik in that same place.

(Ad probandum evidenter latitudinem alicujus loci in aliqua regione, per probacionem altitudinis de polo artico in eodem loco.)

IN some winters night, whan the firmament is clere and thikke/sterred, waite a tyme til that any sterre fix sit lyne right perpendicular over the pol artik, & clepe that sterre A. And wayte another sterre that sit lyne right under A, and under the pol, & clepe that sterre f. And understond wel, that f is nat considered but only to declare that A sit evene overe the pool. Tak thanne anon right the altitude of A from the orizonte, and forget it nat. Lat A and f go farwel til agayns the dawening a gret while; & come thanne agayn, and abyd til that A is evene under the pol and under f; for sothly, than wol f sitte over the pool, and A wol sitte

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WHICHE how manye degrees of almikanteras, in the meridional lyne, be fro the cerce equinoxial unto the senith; or elles fro the pool artik unto the north orizonte; & for so gret a latitude or for so smal a latitude is the table compounded. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

22. To knowe in special the latitude of oure countray, Imene after the latitude of Oxenford, and the heighte of oure pol.

(Ad cognoscendum specialiter latitudinem nostri regionis, scilicet latitudinem Oxonie, et altitudinem poli nostri.)

UNDERSTOND wel, that as fer is the heved of Aries or Libra in the equinoxial from oure orizonte as is the senith from the pole artik; & as hey is the pol artik fro the orizonte, as the equinoxial is fer fro the senith. I prove it thus by the latitude of Oxenford. Understond wel, that the heyghte of oure pool artik fro oure north orizonte is 51 degrees and 50 minutes; than is the senith from oure pool artik 38 degrees and 10 minutes; than is the equinoxial from oure senith 51 degrees and 50 minutes; than is oure south orizonte from oure equinoxial 38 degrees and 10 minutes. Understond wel this reknung. Also forget nat that the senith is 90 degrees of heyghte fro the orizonte, and oure equinoxial is 90 degrees from oure pool artik. Also this shorterewle is soth, that the latitude of any place in a region is the distance fro the senith unto the equinoxial. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

23. To prove evidently the latitude of any place in a region, by the preve of the heyghte of the pol artik in that same place.

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IN some winters night, whan the firmament is clere and thikke/sterred, waite a tyme til that any sterre fix sit lyne right perpendicular over the pol artik, & clepe that sterre A. And wayte another sterre that sit lyne right under A, and under the pol, & clepe that sterre f. And understond wel, that f is nat considered but only to declare that A sit evene overe the pool. Tak thanne anon right the altitude of A from the orizonte, and forget it nat. Lat A and f go farwel til agayns the dawening a gret while; & come thanne agayn, and abyd til that A is evene under the pol and under f; for sothly, than wol f sitte over the pool, and A wol sitte

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under the pool. Tak than eftsones the altitude of A from the orisonte, and note as wel his secounde altitude as his firste altitude; and whan that this is don, rikne how many degrees that the firste altitude of A exceedeth his secounde altitude, and tak half thilke porcioun that is exceeded, and adde it to his secounde altitude; & tak ther the elevacioun of thy pool, and eke the latitude of thy region. for thise two ben of a nombre; this is to seyn, as many degrees as thy pool is elevat, so michel is the latitude of the region. Ensample as thus: par aventure, the altitude of A in the evening is 56 degrees of heyghte, Than wol his secounde altitude or the dawing be 48; that is 8 lasse than 56, that was his firste altitude at even. Take thanne the half of 8, & adde it to 48, that was his secounde altitude, & than hastow 52. Now hastow the heyghte of thy pol, and the latitude of the region. But understond wel, that to prove this conclusioun & many another fair conclusioun, thou most have a plomet hanging on a lyne heyer than thin heved on a perche; & thilke lyne mot hange evene perpendicularer bytwix the pool & thyn eye; & thanne shaltow seen yif A sitte evene over the pool and over f at evene; and also yif f sitte evene over the pool and over A or day. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

24. Another conclusioun to prove the heyghte of the pool artik fro the orisonte. (Alia conclusio ad probandum altitudinem de polo articulo ab orizonte.)

ANy sterre fixe that nevere dissendeth under the orisonte in thilke region, and considere his heyest altitude & his lowest altitude fro the orisonte; and make a nombre of bothe thise altitudes. Tak thanne and abate half that nombre, and tak ther the elevacioun of the pol artik in that same region. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

25. Another conclusioun to prove the latitude of the region, &c. (Alia conclusio ad probandum latitudinem regionis.)

UNDERSTOND wel that the latitude of any place in a region is verreyly the space bytwix the senith of hem that dwellen there & the equinoxial cerkle, north or southe, taking the mesure in the meridional lyne, as sheweth in the almkantaras of thyn Astrolabe. And thilke space is as moche as the pool artik is hey in the same place fro the orisonte. And than is the depressioun of the pol antartik, that is to seyn, than is the pol antartik bynethe the orisonte, the same

quantite of space, neither more ne lasse. Thanne, yif thou desire to knowe this latitude of the region, tak the altitude of the sonne in the middel of the day, whan the sonne is in the hevedes of Aries or of Libra; (for thanne moeveth the sonne in the lyne equinoxial); and abate the nombre of that same sonnes altitude out of 90, and that levethe the latitude of the region. Thus: I suppose that the sonne is thilke day at noon 38 degrees and 10 minutes of minutes out of 90; so levethe there 52 degrees & 50 minutes, the latitude. I seynat thus: but for ensample; for wel I wot the latitude of Oxenforde is certain minutes that thee semeth to long a taryng, to 2 of Aries or of Libra, thanne waite whan the sonne is in any other degree of the zodiak, & considere the degree of his declinacion fro the equinoxial lyne; & yif so be that the sonnes declinacion be northward fro the equinoxial, abate thanne fro the sonnes altitude at noon the nombre of his declinacion, and thanne hastow the heyghte of the hevedes of Aries & Libra. As thus: my sonne is, par aventure, in the firste degree of Leoun, 58 degrees and 10 minutes of heyghte at noon and his declinacion is almost 20 degrees northward fro the equinoxial; abate thanne thilke 20 degrees of declinacion out of the altitude at noon, than levethe thee 38 degrees and odder minutes; lo ther the heved of Aries or Libra, & thyn equinoxial in that region. Also yif so be that the sonnes declinacion be southward fro the equinoxial, adde thanne thilke declinacion to the altitude of the sonne at noon; and tak ther the hevedes of Aries and Libra, and thyn equinoxial. Abate thanne the heyghte of the equinoxial out of 90 degrees, and thanne levethe there the distans of the pole, 51 degrees & 50 minutes, of that region fro the equinoxial. Or elles, yif thee lest, take the heyest altitude fro the equinoxial of any sterre fixe that thou knowest, and tak his nethere elongacioun lengthing fro the same equinoxial lyne, and wirke in the maner forsed. And for more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

26. Declaracioun of the assensioun of signes, &c. (Declaracio de ascensione signorum.)

THE excellence of the spere solide, amonges other noble conclusiouns, sheweth manifeste the diverse assensiouns of signes in diverse places, as wel in the righte cerle as

in the embelif cerle. Thise auctours wryt on that thilke signe is cleped of right assensioun, with which more part of the cerle equinoxial and lasse part of the zodiak assendeth; & thilke signe assendeth embelif, with which lasse part of the equinoxial and more part of the zodiak assendeth. Furtherover they seyn, that in thilke cuntry where as the senith of hem that dwellen there is in the equinoxial lyne, & her orisonte passing by the poles of this worlde, thilke folke han this right cerle and the right orisonte; and everemo the arch of the day and the arch of the night is ther ylike long, and the sonne twyes every yer passing thorow the senith of her heved; and two someres & two winteres in a yer han this forseide people. And the almkantaras in her Astrolabes ben straight as a lyne, so as sheweth in this figure. The utilite to knowe the assensiouns in the righte cerle is this: truste wel that by mediacioun of thilke assensiouns thise astrologiens, by hir tables & hir instrumentz, knowen verreyly the assensioun of every degree and minut in al the zodiak, as shal be shewed. And nota, that this forseid righte orisonte, that is cleped orisonte rectum, divydethe the equinoxial into right angles; and the embelif orisonte, wheras the pol is enhaused upon the orisonte, overhereth the equinoxial in embelif angles, as sheweth in the figure. And for the more declaracioun, lo here the figure.

27. This is the conclusioun to knowe the assensiouns of signes in the right cerle, that is, circulus directus, &c. (Ad cognoscendum ascensiones signorum in recto circulo, qui vocatur circulus directus.)

SET THE HEVED of what signe thee liste to knowe his assending in the right cerle upon the lyne meridional; and waite wher thyn almyr toucheth the bordure, and set ther a prikke. Turne thanne thyriet westward til that the ende of the forseide signe sitte upon the meridional lyne; and eftsones waite wher thyn almyr toucheth the bordure, and set ther another prikke. Rikne thanne the nombre of degrees in the bordure bytwix bothe prikkes, & tak the assensioun of the signe in the right cerle. And thus maystow wirke with every porcioun of thy zodiak, &c. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

28. To knowe the assensiouns of signes in the embelif cerle in every region, I mene, in circulo obliquo. (Ad cognoscendum ascensiones signorum in circulo obliquo, in omni regione.)

SET the heved of the signe which as thee list to knowe his assensioun upon the est orisonte, & waite wher thyn almyr toucheth the bordure, and set ther a prikke. Turne thanne thyriet upward til that the ende of the same signe sitte upon the est orisonte, and waite eftsones wher as thyn almyr toucheth the bordure, and set ther another prikke. Rikne thanne thenombre of degrees in the bordure bytwix bothe prikkes, & tak ther the assensioun of the signe in the embelif cerle. And understond wel, that alle signes in thy zodiak, fro the heved of Aries unto the ende of Virgo, ben cleped signes of the north fro the equinoxial; & these signes arysen bytwix the verrey est and the verrey north in oure orisonte generally for evere. And alle signes fro the heved of Libra unto the ende of Pisces ben cleped signes of the south fro the equinoxial; and thise signes arysen evermo bytwix the verrey est and the verrey south in oure orisonte. Also every signe bytwix the heved of Capricorne unto the ende of Geminis aryseth on oure orisonte in lasse than two houres equales; and thise same signes, fro the heved of Capricorne unto the ende of Geminis, ben cleped Tortuos signes or Croked signes, for they arisen embelif on oure orisonte; and thise crokede signes ben obedient to the signes that ben of right assensioun. The signes of right assensioun ben fro the heved of Cancer to the ende of Sagittare; and thise signes arysen more upright, and they ben called eke sovereyn signes; & everich of hem aryseth in more space than in two houres. Of which signes, Gemini obeyeth to Cancer; and Taurus to Leo; Aries to Virgo; Pisces to Libra; Aquarius to Scorpioun; and Capricorne to Sagittare. And thus evermo two signes, that ben ylike fer fro the heved of Capricorne, obeyen everich of hem til other. And for more declaracioun, lo here the figure.

29. To knowe justly the foure quarters of the world, as est, west, north, and south. (Ad cognoscendum evidenter quatuor partes mundi, scilicet, orientem, austrum, aquilonem, et occidentem.)

MAKE the altitude of thy sonne whan thee list, and note wel the quarter of the world in which the sonne is for the tyme by the azimutz. Turne thanne thyn Astrolabe, and set the degree of the sonne in the almkantaras of his altitude, on thilke side that the sonne stant, as is the manere in taking of houres; and ley thy label on the degree of the sonne, and rikne how many degrees of

the bordure ben bytwix the lyne meridional and the point of thy label; & notewel that noumbre. Turne thanne agayn thyn Astrolabe, and set the point of thy gret rewle, ther thou takest thyn altitudes, upon as many degrees in his bordure fro his meridional as was the point of thy label fro the lyne meridional on the wombesyde. Tak thanne thyn Astrolabe with bothe handes sadly and sleyly, and lat the sonne shyne thorow bothe holes of thy rewle; & sleyly, in thilke shyninge, lat thyn Astrolabe couch adoun evene upon a smothe grond, & thanne wol the verrey lyne meridional of thyn Astrolabe lye evene south, and the est lyne wole lye est, and the west lyne west, and north lyne north, so that thou werkesofly and avisely in the couching; and thus hastow the 4 quarters of the firmament. And for the more declaracioun, lo here the figure.

30. To knowe the altitude of planetes fro the wey of the sonne, whether so they be north or south fro the forseide wey.

(Ad cognoscendum altitudinem planetarum a cursu solis, utrum sint in parte australi vel boreali a cursu supra dicto.)

WHAN that a planete is in the lyne meridional, yif that hiralitude be of the same heyghte that is the degree of the sonne for that day, and than is the planete in the verrey wey of the sonne, & hath no latitude. And yif the altitude of the planete be heyere than the degree of the sonne, than is the planete north fro the wey of the sonne swich a quantite of latitude as sheweth by thyn almikanteras. And yif the altitude of the planete be lasse than the degree of the sonne, thanne is the planete south fro the wey of the sonnes swich a quantite of latitude as sheweth by thyn almikanteras. This is to seyn, fro the wey wheras the sonne wente thilke day, but nat from the wey of the sonne in every place of the zodiak. And for the more declaracioun, lo here the figure.

31. To knowe the senith of the arysing of the sonne, this is to seyn, the partie of the orizonte in which that the sonne aryseth.

(Ad cognoscendum signum de ortu solis, scilicet, illam partem orientis in qua oritur sol.)

NOw most first considere that the sonne aryseth nat alwey verrey est, but some tyme by north the est, & some tyme by southe the est. Sothly, the sonne aryseth nevermo verrey est in oure orizonte, but he be in the heved of Aries or Libra. Now is thyn orizonte departed in 24 parties by thy azimuth, in signification of 24 parties of the

world; albeit so that shipmen rikne thilke parties in 32. Thanne is ther no more but waite in which azimuth that thy sonne cometh at his arysing; & take ther the senith of the arysing of the sonne. The manere I mene, as in this cas, first is it divided in 4 plages principall with the lyne that goth from est to west, and than with another lyne that goth fro south to north. Than is it divided in smale parties of azimuth, as est, and est by southe, wheras is the firste partie to partie, til that thou come agayn unto the est lyne. Thus maistow understond also the senith of any sterre, in which partie he ryseth, &c. And for the more declaracioun, lo here the figure.

32. To knowe in which partie of the firmament is the conjuncion.

(Ad cognoscendum in qua parte firmamenti sunt conjunciones solis et lune.)

CONSIDERE the tyme of the conjuncion by thy kalender, as thus; lok how many houres thilke conjuncion is fro the midday of the day precedent, as sheweth by the canon of thy kalender. Rikne thanne thilke nombre of houres in the bordure of thyn Astrolabe, as thou art wont to do in knowing of the houres of the day or of the night; and ley thy label over the degree of the sonne; and thanne wol the point of thy label sitte upon the hour of the conjuncion. Loke thanne in which azimuth the degree of thy sonne sitte, and in that partie of the firmament is the conjuncion. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

33. To knowe the senith of the altitude of the sonne, &c.

(Ad cognoscendum signa de altitudine solis.)

THIS is no more to seyn but any tyme of the day tak the altitude of the sonne; and by the azimuth in which he stondeth, maystow seen in which partie of the firmament he is. And in the same wyse maystow seen, by thenight, of any sterre, whether the sterre sitte est or west or north, or any partie bytwene, after the name of the azimuth in which is the sterre. And for the more declaracioun, lo here the figure.

34. To knowe sothly the degree of the longitude of the mone, or of any planete that hath no latitude for the tyme fro the ecliptik lyne.

(Ad cognoscendum veraciter gradum de longitudine lune, vel alicujus planetæ qui non habet longitudinem pro tempore causante linea ecliptica.)

WHEN the altitude of the mone, and rikne thyn altitude upon among thyn almikanteras on which syde that the mone stande; & set there a prikke. Tak thenne anon right, upon the mone syde, the altitude of any sterre which that thou knowest, and set his centre upon his altitude among thyn almikanteras ther the sterre is founde. Waite thanne which degree of the zodiak toucheth the prikke of the altitude of the mone, and tak ther the degree in which the mone standeth. This conclusioun is verrey soth, yif the sterres in thyn Astrolabe stonden after the throwe; of comune, tretis of Astrolabe ne make non excepcioun whether the mone have latitude, or non; ne on whether syde of the mone the altitude of the sterre fix be taken. And nota, that yif the mone shewe himself by light of day, than maystow wyrke this same conclusioun by the sonne, as wel as by the fix sterre. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

35. This is the workinge of the conclusioun, to knowe yif that any planete be directe or retrograde.

(Hec conclusio operatur ad cognoscendum si aliqua planeta sit directa vel retrograda.)

WHEN the altitude of any sterre that is cleped a planete, and note it wel. And tak eek anon the altitude of any sterre fix that thou knowest, & note it wel also. Come thanne agayn the thridde or the ferthe night next following; for thanne shaltow aperceyve wel the moeving of a planete, whether so he moeve forthward or bakward. Hwaite wel thanne whan that thy sterre fix is in the same altitude that she was whan thou toke hir firste altitude; and tak than eftsones the altitude of the forseide planete, and note it wel. For trust wel, yif so be that the planete be on the right syde of the meridional lyne, so that his firste altitude was, thanne is the planete directe. And yif he be on the west syde in that condicion, thanne is he retrograde. And yif so be that this planete be upon the east syde whan his altitude is taken, so that his secounde altitude be more than his firste altitude, thanne is he retrograde, and yif he be on the west syde, than he is directe. But the contrarie of these parties is of the cours of the mone; for sothly, the mone moeveth the contrarie from othere planetes as in hir episcle, but in non other manere. And for the more declaracioun, lo here thy figure.

36. The conclusiouns of equaciouns of houses, after the Astrolabe, &c.

(Conclusio de equacione domorum.)

ET the byginning of the degree that assendeth upon the ende of the 8 houre inequal; thanne wol the byginning of the 2 hous sitte upon the lyne of midnight. Remeve thanne the degree that assendeth, and set him on the ende of the 10 houre inequal; & thanne wol the byginning of the 3 hous sitte upon the midnight lyne. Bring up agayn the same degree that assendeth first, and set him upon the orizonte; and thanne wol the beginning of the 4 hous sitte upon the lyne of midnight. Tak thanne the nadir of the degree that first assendeth, and set him on the ende of the 2 houre inequal; and thanne wol the byginning of the 5 hous sitte upon the lyne of midnight; set thanne the nadir of the assendent on the ende of the 4 houre, than wol the byginning of the 6 hous sitte on the midnight lyne. The byginning of the 7 hous is nadir of the assendent, and the byginning of the 8 hous is nadir of the 2; and the byginning of the 9 hous is nadir of the 3; and the byginning of the 10 hous is nadir of the 4; & the byginning of the 11 hous is nadir of the 5; and the byginning of the 12 hous is nadir of the 6. And for the more declaracion, lo here the figure.

37. Another manere of equaciouns of houses by the Astrolabe.

(De aliqua forma equacionis domorum secundum astrolabium.)

WHEN thyn assendent, & thanne hastow thy 4 angles; for wel thou wost that the opposit of thyn assendent, that is to seyn, thy byginning of the 7 hous, sitte upon the west orizonte; and the byginning of the 10 hous sitte upon the lyne meridional; and his opposit upon the lyne of midnight. Thanne ley thy label over the degree that assendeth, and rekne fro the point of thy label alle the degrees in the bordure, til thou come to the meridional lyne; and departe alle thilke degrees in 3 evene parties, and take the evene equacion of 3; for ley thy label over everich of 3 parties, and than maistow see by thy label in which degree of the zodiak is the byginning of everich of these same houses fro the assendent; that is to seyn, the beginning of the 12 house next above thyn assendent; and thanne the beginning of the 11 house; and thanne the 10, upon the meridional lyne; as I first seide. The same wyse wirke thou fro the assendent down to the lyne of midnight; and thanne thus hastow other 3 houses, that is to seyn, the byginning of the 2, and the 3, and the 4 houses; thanne

is the nadir of these 3 houses the beginning of the 3 houses that follow. And for the more declaracion, lo here thy figure.

38. To finde the lyne meridional to dwelle in any certein place.
(Ad inveniendum lineam meridianalem per subtiles operationes.)

THAK a rond plate of metal; for warping, the brodere the better; & make therupon a just compas, a lite within the bordure; and ley this runde plate upon an evne grond, or on an evne ston, or on an evne stok fix in the gronde; and ley it even by a level. And in centre of the compas stike an evne pin or a wyr upright; the smallere the better. Set thy pin by a plom/rewle evne upright; & let this pin be no lengere than a quarter of the diametre of thy compas, fro the centre. And waite bisily, aboute 10 or 11 of the clokke and whan the sonne shyneth, whan the shadwe of the pin entreteth anything within the cercle of thy plate an heer/mele, and mark ther a prikke with inke. Abyde thanne stille waiting on the sonne after 1 of the clokke, til that the schadwe of the wyr of the pin passe onything out of the cercle of the compas, be it never so lyte; and set ther another prikke of inke. Take than a compas, and mesure evne the mid-del bytwix bothe prikkes; and set ther a prikke. Take thanne a rewle, and draw a stryke, evne a lyne fro the pin unto the mid-del prikke; & tak ther thy lyne meridional for evermo, as in that same place. And yif thou drawe a cros/lyne over/ thwart the compas, justly over the lyne meridional, than hastow est and west and south; and, par consequence, than the nadir of the south lyne is the north lyne. And for more declaracion, lo here thy figure.

39. Description of the meridional lyne, of longitudes, and latitudes of citees and townes from on to another of clymatz.

THIS lyne meridional is but a maner descripcion of lyne imagined, that passeth up/ on the poles of this world & by the senith of oure heved. And hit is yeleded the lyne meridional; for in what place that any man/ er man is at any tyme of the yeer, whan that the sonne by moeving of the firmament cometh to his verrey meridian place, than is hit verrey midday, that we clepen oure noon, as to thilke man; and therefore is it cleped the lyne of midday. And nota, for evermo, of 2 citees or of 2 townes, of whiche that o toun aprocheth more toward the est than doth that other toun, truste wel that thilke townes han diverse meridians. Nota also, that the arch of the equinoxial, that

is conteyned or bounded bytwix the 2 meridians, is cleped the longitude of the toun. And yif so be that two townes have ylyke meridian, or oon meridian, than is the distance of hem bothe ylyke fro the est; and the contrarie. And in this manere they chaungen her almikanteras; for the chausing of the pool and the distance of the sonne. The longitude of a clymat is a lyne imagined fro est to west, ylyke distant bytwix them alle. The latitude of a clymat is a lyne imagined from north to south the space of the erthe, fro the beginning of the firste clymat unto the verrey ende of the same climat, evne directe a- tours; and somme of hem seyn that yif men clepen the latitude, thaimene the arch twix the senith & the equinoxial. Thanne sey they that the distaunce fro the equinoxial unto the ende of a clymat, evne a- gayns the pole artyk, is the latitude of a clymat for sothe. And for more declaracion, lo here thy figure.

40. To knowe with which degree of the zodiak that any planete assendith on the orisonte, whether so that his latitude be north or south.

KNOWE by thyn almenak the degree of the ecliptik of any signe in which that the planete is rehined for to be, and that is cleped the degree of his longitude; and knowe also the degree of his latitude fro the ecliptik, north or south. And by these samples followinge in special, maystow wirke for sothe in every signe of the zodiak. The degree of the longitude, par aventure, of Venus or of another planete, was 6 of Capricorne, & the latitude of him was northward 2 degrees fro the ecliptik lyne. I tok a subtil compas, and cleped that oon poynt of my compas A, and that other poynt f. Than tok I the point of A, and set it in the ecliptik lyne evne in my zodiak, in the degree of the longitude of Venus, that is to seyn, in the 6 degree of Capricorne; and thanne sette I the point of f upward in the same signe, bycause that the latitude was north, upon the latitude of Venus, that is to seyn, in the 6 degree fro the heved of Capricorne; and thus have I 2 degrees bytwix my two prikkes. Than leide I down softly my compas, and sette the degree of the longitude upon the orisonte; tho tok I & weerde my label in maner of a peyre tables to resceyve distinctly the prikkes of my compas. Tho tok I this forseide label, and leide it fix over the degree of my longitude; tho tok I up my compas, and sette the point of

in the weex on my label, as evne as I coude greese over the ecliptik lyne, in the ende of the longitude; & sette the point of f endlang in my label upon the space of the latitude, inward and over the zodiak, that is to seyn, northward fro the ecliptik. Than leide I down my compas, and lokede wel in the wey upon the prikke of A and of f; tho turned I my riet til that the prikke of f sat upon the orisonte; than saw I wel that the body of Venus, in hir latitude of 2 degrees septentrionalis, assended, in the ende of the 6 degree, in the heved of Capricorne. And nota, that in the same maner maistow wirke with any latitude septentrional in alle signes; but sothly the latitude meridional of a planete in Capricorne may not be take, bycause of the litel space bytwix the ecliptik and the bordure of the Astrolabe; but sothly, in alle other signes it may. Also the degree, par aventure, of Juppiter or of another planete, was in the first degree of Pisces in longitude, and his latitude was 3 degrees meridional; tho tok I the point of A, and sette it in the firste degree of Pisces on the ecliptik, and thanne sette I the point of f downward in the same signe, bycause that the latitude was south 3 degrees, that is to seyn, fro the heved of Pisces; and thus have I 3 degrees bytwix bothe prikkes; thanne sette I the degree of the longitude upon the orisonte. Tho tok I my label, and leide it fix upon the degree of the longitude; tho sette I the point of A on my label, evne over the ecliptik lyne, in the ende evne of the degree of the longitude, & sette the point of f endlang in my label the space of 3 degrees of the latitude fro the zodiak, this is to seyn, southward fro the ecliptik, toward the bordure; and turned my riet til the prikke of f sat upon the orisonte; thanne saw I wel that the body of Juppiter, in his latitude of 3 degrees meridional, ascended with 14 degrees of Pisces in horoscopo. And in this maner maistow wirke with any latitude meridional, as I first seide, save in Capricorne. And yif thou wolt pleye this craft with the arysing of the mone, loke thou rehne wel hir cours houre by houre; for she nedwellet nat in a degree of hir longitude but a litel whyle, as thou wel knowest; but natheles, yif thou rekne hir verrey moeving by thy tables houre after houre, thou shalt do wel ynow.

Explicit tractatus de Conclusionibus Astrolabii, compilatus per Galfridum Chauciers ad filium suum Lodewicum, scolarem tunc temporis Oxonie, ac sub tutela illius nobilissimi philosophi Magistri N. Strode, etc.

Supplementary Propositions.

41. Ambra Recta.

IF IT SO BE that thou wilt werke by umbra recta, and thou may come to the bas of the toure, in this maner thou schalt werke. Tak the altitude of the toure by bothe holes, so that thy rewle ligge even in a poynt. Ensample as thus: I see him thorw at the poynt of 4; then mete I the space between me and the toure, and I finde it 20 feet; than beholde I how 4 is to 12, right so is the space betwix thee & the toure to the altitude of the toure. For 4 is the thridde part of 12, so is the space between thee & the toure the thridde part of the altitude of the toure; than thryes 20 feet is the heyghte of the toure, with adding of thyn owne persone to thyn eye. And this rewle is so general in umbra recta, fro the poynt of oon to 12. And yif thy rewle falle upon 5, than is 5 12 parties of the heyghte the space between thee and the toure; with adding of thyn owne heygth.

42. Ambra Versa.

ANOTHER maner of workinge, by umbra versa. Yif so be that thou may nat come to the bas of the toure, I see him thorw the nombre of 1; I sette ther a prikke at my fore; than go I neer to the toure, and I see him thorw at the poynt of 2, and there I sette another prikke; and I beholde how 1 hath him to 12, and ther finde I that it hath him twelfe sythes; than beholde I how 2 hath him to 12, and thou shalt finde it sexe sythes; than thou shalt finde that as 12 above 6 is the nombre of 6, right so is the space between thy two prikkes the space of 6 tymes thyn altitude. And note, that at the ferste altitude of 1, thou settest a prikke; and afterward, whan thou seest him at 2, ther thou settest another prikke; than thou findest between two prikkys 60 feet; than thou shalt finde that 10 is the 6 party of 60. And then is 10 feet the altitude of the toure. For other poyntis, yif it fille in umbra versa, as thus: I sette caas it fill upon 2, & at the secunde upon 3; than schalt thou finde that 2 is 6 parties of 12; & 3 is 4 parties of 12; than passeth 6 4, by nombre of 2; so is the space between two prikkes twyes the heyghte of the toure. And yif the differens were thryes, than shulde it be three tymes; and thus mayst thou werke fro 2 to 12; and yif it be 4, 4 tymes; or 5, 5 tymes; et sic de ceteris.

43. Umbra Recta.

ANOTHER maner of wyking be umbra recta. Yif it so be that thou mayst nat come to the baas of the tour, in this maner thou shalt werke. Sette thy rewle upon 1 till thou see the altitude, and sette at thy foot a prikke. Than sette thy rewle upon 2, and beholde what is the difference between 1 & 2 & thou shalt finde that it is 1. Than mete the space between two prikkes, and that is the 12 partie of the altitude of the tour. And yif ther were 2, it were the 6 partie; and yif ther were 3, the 4 partie; et sic deinceps. And note, yif it were 5, it were the 5 party of 12; and 7, 7 party of 12; and note, at the altitude of thy conclusioun, adde the stature of thyn heyghte to thyn eye.

44. Another maner conclusion, to knowe the mene mote and the argumentis of any planete. To knowe the mene mote & the argumentis of every planete fro yere to yere, from day to day, from houre to houre, and from smale fraccionis infinite. (Ad cognoscendum medius motus et argumenta de hora in horam cujuslibet planete, de anno in annum, de die in diem.)

IN THIS maner shalt thou worche: consider thy rote first, the whiche is made the beginning of the tables fro the yere of oure lord 1397, and entere hit into thy slate for the laste meridie of Decembre; & than consider the yere of oure lord, what is the date, & behold whether thy date be more or lasse than the yere 1397. And yif hit so be that hit be more, loke how many yeres hit passeth, and with so many entere into thy tables in the first lyne theras is writen anni collecti et expansi. And loke where the same planet is writen in the hede of thy table, and than loke what thou findest in directe of the same yere of oure lord whiche is passid, be hit 8, or 9, or 10, or what nombre that evere it be, til the tyme that thou come to 20, or 40, or 60. And that thou findest in directe wryte in thy slate under thy rote, and adde hit togeder, and that is thy mene mote, for the laste meridian of the Decembre, for the same yere whiche that thou hast purposed. And if hit so be that hit passe 20, consider wel that fro 1 to 20 ben anni expansi, and fro 20 to 3000 ben anni collecti; and if thynombre passe 20, than take that thou findest in directe of 20, and if hit be more, as 6 or 18, than take that thou findest in directe thereof, that is to sayen, signes, degrees, minutes, and secoundes, and adde togedere unto thy rote; and thus to make rotes; and note, that if hit so be

that the yere of oure lord be lasse than the rote, whiche is the yere of oure lord 1397, than shalt thou wryte in the same wyse into thy table in the same yere that be lasse, as I taught before; & than consider secoundes thyn entringe conteyneth. And so be that ther be 2 entrees, than adde hem togeder, & after withdrawe hem from the rote, the yere of oure lord 1397; and there sidue that leveth is thy mene mote fro the laste meridie of Decembre, the whiche thou hast purposed; and if hit so be that thou wolt weten thy mene mote for any day, or for any fraccioun of day, in this maner thou shalt worche. Make thy rote fro the laste day of Decembre in the maner as I have taught, and afterward behold how many monethis, dayes, & houres ben passid from the meridie of Decembre, & with that entere with the laste moneth that is ful passed, and take that thou findest in directe of him, and wryte hit in thy slate; and entere with as many dayes as be more, and wryte that thou findest in directe of the same planete that thou worchest for; & in the same wyse in the table of houres, for houres that ben passed, and adde alle these to thy rote; and the residue is the mene mote for the same day and the same houre.

45. Another manere to knowe the mene mote.

IF THOU wolt make the mene mote of any planete to be by Arsechieles tables, take thy rote, the whiche is for the yere of oure lord 1397; and if so be that thy yere be passid the date, wryte that date, and than wryte the nombre of the yeres. Than withdrawe the yeres out of the yeres that ben passed that rote. Ensampul as thus: the yere of oure lord 1400, I wolde witen, precise, my rote; than wroot I furst 1400. And under that nombre I wrote a 1397; than withdrew I the laste nombre out of that, and than fond I the residue was 3 yere; I wiste that 3 yere was passed fro the rote, the whiche was writen in my tables. Than afterward soghte I in my tables the annis collectis et expansis, & amonge myn expance yeres fond I 3 yere. Than tok I alle the signes, degrees, & minutes, that I fond directe under the same planete that I wroghte for, and wroot so many signes, degrees, and minutes in my slate, and afterward added I to signes, degrees, minutes, and secoundes, the whiche I fond in my rote the yere of oure lord 1397; and kepte the residue; and than had I the mene mote for the laste day of Decembre. And if thou

woldest wete the mene mote of any planete in March, Aprile, or May, other in any other tyme or moneth of the yere, loke how many monethes and dayes ben passed from the laste day of Decembre, the yere of oure lord 1400; and so with monethes & dayes entere into thy table ther thou findest thy mene mote ywriten in monethes & dayes, and take alle the signes, degrees, minutes, and secoundes that thou findest ywriten in directe of thymonethes, & adde to signes, degrees, minutes, & secoundes that thou findest with thy rote the yere of oure lord 1400, & the residue that leveth is the mene mote for that same day. And note, if hit so be that thou woldest wete the mene mote in any yere that is lasse than thy rote, withdrawe the nombre of so many yeres as hit is lasse than the yere of oure lord 1397, and kepe the residue; and so many yeres, monethes, & dayes entere into thy tabelis of thymenemote. And take alle the signes, degrees, minutes, and secoundes, that thou findest in directe of alle the yeris, monethes, & dayes, and wryte hem in thy slate; and above thilke nombre wryte the signes, degrees, minutes, and secoundes, the whiche thou findest with thy rote the yere of oure lord 1397; and withdrawe alle the nethere signes and degrees fro the signes and degrees, minutes, & secoundes of other signes with thy rote; and thy residue that leveth is thymene mote for that day.

46. For to knowe at what houre of the day, or of the night, shal be flode or ebbe.

FIRST wite thou certainly, how that haven stondesth, that thou list to werke for; that is to say in whiche place of the firmament the mone being, maketh fulle see. Than awayte thou redily in what degree of the zodiak that the mone at that tyme is inne.

Bringe furth than the labelle, and set the point therof in that same cost that the mone maketh flode, and set thou there the degree of the mone according with the egge of the label. Than afterward awayte where is than the degree of the sonne, at that tyme. Remeve thou than the label fro the mone, and bringe and sette it justly upon the degree of the sonne. And the point of the label shal than declare to thee, at what houre of the day or of the night shal be flode. And there also maist thou wite by the same point of the label, whether it be, at that same tyme, flode or ebbe, or half flode, or quarter flode, or ebbe, or half or quarter ebbe; or ellis at what houre it was last, or shal be next by night or by day, thou than shalt esely knowe, &c. furthermore, if it so be that thou happe to worke for this matere aboute the tyme of the conjunction, bringe furthe the degree of the mone with the labelle to that coste as it is before seyd. But than thou shalt understonde that thou may not bringe furthe the label fro the degree of the mone as thou dide before; for why the sonne is than in the same degree with the mone. And so thou may at that tyme by the point of the labelle unremoved knowe the houre of the flode or of the ebbe, as it is before seyd, &c. And evermore as thou findest the mone passe fro the sonne, so remeve thou the labelle than fro the degree of the mone, & bringe it to the degree of the sonne. And worke thou than as thou dide before, &c. Or elles knowe thou what houre it is that thou art inne, by thyn instrument. Than bringe thou furth fro thennes the labelle and ley it upon the degree of the mone, and therby may thou wite also whan it was flode, or whan it wol be next, be it night or day; &c.

Here end Chaucer's Propositions supplementary to his Treatise on the Astrolabe.

THE LEGEND OF GOODE WIMMEN * PROLOGUE



THOUSAND SYTHES HAVE I HERD
men telle,
That ther is joye in heven, and peyne in helle;
And I acorde wel that hit be so;
But natheles, this wot I wel also,
That ther nis noon that dwelleth in this
contree,
That either hath in helle or heven ybe,

Ne may of hit non other weyes witen,
But as he hath herd seyde, or founde hit
writen;
for by assay ther may no man hit preve.
But goddes forbode, but men shulde leve
Wel more thing then men han seen with ye!
Men shal nat wenen everything a lye
for that he seigh it nat of yore ago.
God wot, a thing is never the lesse so
Thogh every wight ne may hit nat ysee.
Bernard the monk ne saugh nat al, parde!

THAN mote we to bokes that we finde,
Through which that olde thinges been
in minde,
And to the doctrine of these olde wyse,
Yeven credence, in every skilful wyse,
And trowen on these olde aproved stories
Of holinesse, of regnes, of victories,
Of love, of hate, of other sundry thinges,
Of whiche I may not maken rehersinges.
And if that olde bokes were awaye,
Vloren were of remembraunce the keye.
Wel oghte us than on olde bokes leve,
Theras ther is non other assay by preve.

AND, as for me, though that my wit be
lyte,
On bokes for to rede I me delyte,

And in myn herte have hem in reverence;
And to hem yeve swich lust and swich credence,
That ther is wel unethe game noon
That from my bokes make me to goon,
But hit be othre upon the halyday,
Or elles in the joly tyme of May;
Whan that I here the smale foules singe,
And that the floures ginne for to springe,
Farwel my studie, as lasting that sesoun!
I have I therto this condicioun
That, of alle the floures in the mede,
Than love I most these floures whyte

and rede,
Swiche as men callen daysies in our toun.
To hem have I so greet affeccoun,
As I seyde erst, whan comen is the May,
That in my bed ther daweth me no day
That I nam up, and walking in the mede
To seen these floures agein the sonne sprede,
Whan hit upriseth by the morwe shene,
The longe day, thus walking in the grene.
And whan the sonne ginneth for to weste,
Than closeth hit, and draweth hit to reste.
So sore hit is afered of the night,
Thi on the morwe, that hit is dayes light.
This dayesye, of alle floures flour,
fulfil of vertu and of alle honour,
And ever ylyke fair and fresh of hewe,
As wel in winter as in somer newe,
fain wolde I preisen, if I coude aright;
But wo is me, hit lyth nat in my might!

OR wel I wot, that folk han herbeforn
Of making ropen, and lad away the
corn;
And I come after, glening here and
there,
And am ful glad if I may finde an ere

Of any goodly word that they han left.
And, if hit happe me rehersen eft
That they han in her fresshe songes sayd,
I hope that they wil nat ben evel apayd,
Sith hit is seid in forthering and honour
Of hem that either serven leef or flour.
for trusteth wel, I ne have nat undertake
As of the leef, ageyn the flour, to make;
Ne of the flour to make, ageyn the leef,
No more than of the corn ageyn the sheef.
for, as to me, is leefe noon ne lother;
I am withholde yit with never nother.
I not who serveth leef, ne who the flour;
That nis nothing the entent of my labour.
for this werk is al of another tunne,
Of olde story, or swich stryf was begunne.
But wherfor that I spak, to yeve credence
To bokes olde and doon hem reverence,
Is for men shulde autoritees beleve,
Ther as ther lyth non other assay by preve.
for myn entent is, or I fro yow fare,
The naked text in English to declare
Of many a story, or elles of many a geste,
As autours seyn; leveth hem if yow leste!

THAN passed was almost the month
of May,
And I had romed, al the someres
day,
The grene medew, of which that I
yow tolde,

Upon the fresshe days to beholde,
And that the sonne out of the south gan weste,
And closed was the flour and goon to reste
for derknesse of the night, of which she dredde,
Hoom to myn hous ful swiftly I me spedde;
And, in a litel erber that I have,
Ybenched newe with turves fresshe ygrave,
I bad men shulde me my couche make;
for deyntee of the newe someres sake,
I bad hem strowe floures on my bed.
Whan I was layd, and had myn eyen hed,
I fel aslepe within an houre or two.
Me mette how I was in the medew tho,
And that I romed in that same gyse,
To seen that flour, as ye han herd devyse.
fair was this medew, as thoughte me overal;
With floures swote enbrowded was it al;
As for to speke of gomme, or erbe, or tree,
Comparisoun may noon ymake be.
for hit surmounted pleyntly alle odoures,
And eek of riche beaute alle floures.
forgeten had the erthe his pore estat
Of winter, that him naked made and mat,
And with his sward of cold so sore had greved.
Now had the atempre sonne al that releved,
And clothed him in grene al newe agayn.
The smale foules, of the seson fayn,
That from the panter and the net ben scaped,
Upon the fouler, that hem made awhaped
In winter, and distroyed had hir brood,
In his despyt, hem thoughte hit did hem good
To singe of him, and in hir song despyse
The foule chert that, for his covetyse,
Had hem betrayed with his sophistrye.
This was hir song: The fouler we defye!
Somme songen layes on the braunches clere
Of love and May, that joye hit was to here,
In worship and in preysing of hir make,
And of the newe blisful someres sake,
That songen, Blissed be seynt Valentyn!
for at his day I chees yow to be myn,
Withoute repenting, myn herte swete!
And therwithal hir bekes gonnen mete.
They dide honour and humble obeisaunces,
And after diden other observaunces
Right plesing unto love and to nature;
So ech of hem doth wel to creature.
This song to herke I dide al myn entente,
for why I mette I wiste what they mente.
Til at the laste a larke song above:
I see, quod she, the mighty god of love!
Lo! yond he cometh, I see his winges sprede!
Tho gan I loken endelong the mede,
And saw him come, and in his hond a quene,
Clothed in ryal abite al of grene,
A fret of gold she hadde next hir heer,
And upon that a whyt coroun she beer

The
Legend of
Goode
Wimmen

With many floures, and I shal nat lye;
for al the world, right as the dayesye
Icoroned is with whyte leues lyte,
Swich were the floures of hir coroun whyte,
for of o perle fyn and oriental
Hir whyte coroun was ymaked al;
for which the whyte coroun, above the grene,
Made hir lyk a dayisye for to sene,
Considered eek the fret of gold above.

CLOTHED was this mighty god of
love
Of silk, ybrouded ful of grene
greves;
A garland on his heed of rose/leues
Steked al with lilie floures newe;

But of his face I can nat seyn the hewe,
for sekirly his face shoon so brighte,
That with the gleem astoned was the sighte;
A furlong/way I mighte him nat beholde.
But at the laste in hande I saw him holde
Two fyry dartes, as the gledes rede;
And aungelich his wenges gan he sprede.
And al be that men seyn that blind is he,
Hlgate me thoughte he mighte wel ysee;
for sternely on me he gan biholde,
So that his lokyng doth myn herte colde.

AND by the hande he held the noble quene,
Corowned with whyte, & clothed al in grene,
So womanly, so benigne, and so meke,
That in this world, thogh that men wolde seke,
Half hir beautee shulde men nat finde
In creature that formed is by kinde,
Hir name was Alceste the debonayre;
I prey to God that ever falle she fayre!
for ne hadde confort been of hir presence,
I had be deed, withouten any defence,
for drede of Loves wordes and his chere,
As, whan tyme is, hereafter ye shal here.
Byhind this god of love, upon this grene,
I saw comyng of ladyes nyntene
In ryal abite, a ful esy pas,
And after hem com of wemen swich a tras
That, sin that God Adam had made of erthe,
The thredde part of wemen, ne the fertehe,
Ne wende I nat by possibilitee
Hadden ever in this world ybe;
And trewe of love thise wemen were echoon.

NOON, whether was that a wonder thing or
noon,
That, right anon as that they gonne espye
This flour, which that I clepe the dayesye,
ful sodeinly they stinten alle atones,
And kneled adoun, as it were for the nones.
And after that they wenten in compas,
Daunsinge aboute this flour an esy pas,
And songen, as it were in carole/wyse,
This balade, which that I shal yow devyseye.

Balade.

EYD, Absolon, thy gilte tresses clere;
Ester, ley thou thy meknesse al adoun;
Hyd, Jonathas, al thy frendly manere;
Penelope, and Marcia Catoun,

Mak of your wyfhod no comparisoun;
Hyde ye your beautes, Isoude and Eleyne,
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

HY faire body, lat hit nat appere,
Lavyne; and thou, Lucesse of Rome town,
And Polixene, that boghte love so dere,
Eek Cleopatre, with al thy passoun,
Hyde ye your trouthe in love and your renoun;
And thou, Tisbe, that hast for love swich peyne:
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

HERRO, Dido, Laudomia, alle infere,
Eek Phyllis, hanging for thy Demophoun,
And Canace, espyed by thy chere,
Ysiphile, betrayed with Jasoun,
Mak of your trouthe in love no boost ne soun;
Nor Ypermistre or Adriane, ne pleynye;
Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.

WHAN that this balade al ysongen was,
Upon the softe and swote grene gras
They setten hem ful softly adoun,
By ordre alle in compas, alle enveroun.
first sat the god of love, and than this quene
With the whyte coroun, clad in grene;
And sithen al the remenant by and by,
As they were of degree, ful curteisly;
Ne nat a word was spoken in the place
The mountance of a furlong/way of space.

LENING faste by under a bente,
Abood, to knowen what this peple mente,
As stille as any stoon; til at the laste,
The god of love on me his eye caste,
And seyde, Who resteth ther? and I answered
Unto his axing, whan that I him herde,
And seyde, Sir, hit am I; and cam him neer,
And salued him. Quod he: What dostow heer
In my presence, and that so boldely?
for it were better worthy, trewely,
A werm to comen in my sight than thou.
And why, sir, quod I, and hit lyke yow?
for thou, quod he, art therto nothing able.
My servaunts been alle wyse and honourable.
Thou art my mortal fo, and me warreyest,
And of myne olde servaunts thou misseyest,
And hinderest hem with thy translacioun,
And lettest folk to han devocioun
To serven me, and haldest hit folye
To troste on me. Thou mayst hit nat denye;
for in pleyn text, hit nedeth nat to glose,
Thou hast translat the Romauns of the Rose,
That is an heresyge ageyns my lawe,
And makest wyse folk fro me withdrawe.
And thinkest in thy wit, that is ful cool,
That he nis but a verray propre fool
That loveth paramours, to harde and hote.
Wel wot I therby thou beginnest dote
As olde foles, whan hir spirit fayleth;
Than blame they folk, & wite nat what hem ayleth.

Hast thou nat mad in English eek the book
How that Crisseye Troilus forsook,
In shewinginge how that wemen han don mis?

But natheles, answer me now to this,
Why noldest thou as wel han seyde goodnesse
Of wemen, as thou hast seyde wikkednesse?
Was ther no good matere in thy minde,
Ne in alle thy bokes coudest thou nat finde
Sum story of wemen that were goode and trewe?
Yis! God wot, sixty bokes olde and newe
Hast thou thyself, alle fulle of stories grete,
That bothe Romains and eek Grekes trete
Of sundry wemen, which lyf that they ladde,
And ever an hundred gode ageyn oon badde.

This knoweth God, and alle clerkes eke,
That usen swiche materes for to seke.
What seith Valerie, Titus, or Claudian?
What seith Jerome ageyns Jovinian?
How clene maydens, and how trewe wyves,
How stedfast widwes during al hir lyves,
Tellethe Jerome; and that nat of a fewe,
But, I dar seyn, an hundred on a rew;e;
That hit is pitee for to rede, and routh,
The wo that they enduren for hir trouthe.
for to hir love were they so trewe,
That, rather than they wolde take a newe,
They chosen to be dede in sundry wyse,
And deyden, as the story wol devyseye;
And some were brened, and some were cut the hals,
And some dreynt, for they wolden nat be fals.
for alle heped they hir maydenhed,
Or elles wedlok, or hir widwehed.

And this thing was nat kept for holinesse,
But al for verray vertu and clenlesse,
And for men shulde sette on hem no lak;
And yit they weren hethen, al the pak,
That were so sore adrad of alle shame.
These olde wemen kepste so hir name,
That in this world I trow men shal nat finde
A man that coude be so trewe and kinde,
As was the leste woman in that tyde.
What seith also the epistels of Ovyde
Of trewe wyves, and of hir labour?
What Vincent, in his Storial Mirour?
Eek al the world of autours maystow here,
Cristen and hethen, trete of swich matere;
It nedeth nat alday thus for tondyte.
But yit I sey, what eyleth thee to wryte
The draf of stories, and forgo the corn?
Byseint Venus, of whom that I was born,
Although that thou reneyed hast my lay,
As othere olde foles many a day,
Thou shalt repente hit, that hit shal be sene!

HAN spak Alceste, the worthieste quene,
And seyde: God, right of your curtesye,
Ye moten herknen if he can repleye
Ageyns these points that ye han to him meved;
A god ne sholde nat be thus agreved,
But of his deitee he shal be stable,
And therto rightful and eek merciable.
He shal nat rightfully his yre wreke
Or he have herd the tother party speke.
Al ne is nat gospel that is to yow pleyned;
The god of love herth many a tale yfeyned.
for in your court is many a losengeour,
And many a queynste totelere accusour,

That tabouren in your eres many a thing
for hate, or for jelous imagining,
And for to han with yow som dalaunce.
Envye (I prey to God yewe hir mischaunce!)
Is lavender in the grete court alway,
for she ne parteth, neither night ne day,
Out of the hous of Cesar; thus seith Dante;
Whoso that goth, alwey she moot nat wante.
This man to yow may wrongly been accused,
Ther as by right him oghte ben excused.
Or elles, sir, for that this man is nyce,
He may translate a thing in no malyce,
But for he useth bokes for to make,
And takth non heed of what matere he take;
Therfor he wroot the Rose and eek Crisseye
Of innocence, and niste what he seyde;
Or him was boden make thilke tweye
Of som persone, and durste hit nat withseye;
for he hath writen many a booke er this.
He ne hath nat doon so grevously amis
To translaten that olde clerkes wryten,
As thogh that he of malice wolde endyten
Despyt of love, and hadde himself ywroght.
This shulde a rightwys lord han in his thocht,
And nat be lyk tiraunts of Lumbardye,
That usen wilfulhed and tirannye,
for he that king or lord is naturel,
Him oghte nat be tiraunt ne cruel.
As is a fermour, to doon the harm he can.
He moste thinke hit is his lige man,
And that him oweth, of verray duetee,
Shewen his peple pleyn benignitee,
And wel to here hir excusaciouns,
And hir compleyntes and peticiouns,
In duewe tyme, whan they shal hit profre.
This is the sentence of the philosopre:
A king to kepe his liges in justyce;
Withouten doute, that is his offyce.
And therto is a king ful depe ysworn,
ful many an hundred winter heer biforn;
And for to kepe his lordes hir degree,
As hit is right and skilful that they be
Enhaunced and honoured, and most dere,
for they ben half/goddes in this world here,
This shal he doon, bothe to pore and riche,
Al be that here stat be nat aliche,
And han of pore folk compassioun.
for lo, the gentil kind of the lion!
for whan a flye offendeth him or byteth,
He with his tayl away the flye smyteth
Al esily; for, of his genterye,
Him deyneth nat to wreke him on a flye,
As doth a curre or elles another beste.
In noble corage oghte been areste,
And weyen every thing by equitee,
And ever han reward to his owen degree.
for, sir, hit is no maystrie for a lord
To dampne a man withoute answer or word;
And, for a lord, that is ful foul to use,
And if so be he may him nat excuse,
But axeth mercy with a sorweful herte,
And profreth him, right in his bare sherte,
To been right at your owne jugement,

Than oghte a god, by short avysement,
Considere his owne honour and his trespas,
for sith no cause of deeth lyth in this cas,
Yow oghte been the lighter merciable;
Leteth your yre, and beth somwhat trefable!
The man hath served yow of his conning,
And forthered your lawe with his making.
Whyl he was yong, he kepte your estat;
I not wher he be now a renegat.
But wel I wot, with that he can endyte,
He hath maked lewed folk delyte
To serve you, in preysing of your name.
He made the book that hight the Hous of fame,
And eek the Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse,
And the Parlement of foules, as I gesse,
And al the love of Palamon and Aryste
Of Thebes, thogh the story is knowen lyte;
And many an ympne for your halydayes,
That highten Balades, Roundels, Virelayes;
And for to speke of other besinesse,
He hath in prose translated Boëce;
And of the Wretched Engendring of Mankinde,
As man may in pope Innocent yfnde;
And mad the Lyf also of seynt Cecyle;
He made also, goon sithen a greet whyl,
Origenes upon the Maudeleyne;
Him oghte now to have the lesse peyne;
He hath mad many a lay and many a thing.
Owl as ye been a god, and eek a king,
I, your Alceste, whylom quene of Trace,
I axe yow this man, right of your grace,
That ye him never hurte in al his lyve;
And he shal sweren yow, and that as blyve,
He shal no more agilten in this wyse;
But he shal maken, as ye wil devyse,
Of wemen trewe in lovinge al hir lyve,
Wherso ye wil, of maiden or of wyve,
And forthren yow, as muche as he misseyde
Or in the Rose or elles in Criseyde.

UHE god of love answerde hir thus
anoon:
Madame, quod he, hit is so long
agoon
That I yow knew so charitable and
trewe,
That never yit, sith that the world was newe,
To me ne fond I better noon than ye.
That, if that I wol save my degree,
I may ne wol nat warne your requeste;
Al lyth in yow, doth with him what yow leste
And al foryeve, withouten lenger space;
for whoso yeveth a yift, or doth a grace,
Do hit by tyme, his thank is wel the more;
And demeth ye what he shal do therfore.
Go thanke now my lady heer, quod he.

ROOS, and down I sette me on my knee,
And seyde thus: Madame, the God above
Foryelde yow, that ye the god of love
Han maked me his wrahte to foryive;
And yeve me grace so long for to live,
That I may knowe soothly what ye be
That han me holpen, and put in swich degree.
But trewely I wende, as in this cas,

Naught have agilt, ne doon to love trespas,
for why a trewe man, withouten drede,
hath nat to parten with a theves dede;
Ne a trewe lover oghte me nat blame,
Thogh that I speke a fals lover som shame.
They oghte rather with me for to holde,
for that I of Criseyde wroot or tolde,
Or of the Rose; whatso myn auctour mente,
Algate, God wot, hit was myn entente
To forthren trouthe in love and hit cheryce;
And to be war fro falsnesse and fro vyce
By swich ensample; this was my meninge.

AND she answerde: Lat be thyn arguinge;
for Love ne wol nat countrepleied be.
In right ne wrong; and terme this at me!
Thou hast thy grace, and hold thee right therto.
Now wol I seyn what penance thou shalt do
for thy trespas, and understond hit here:
Thou shalt, whyl that thou livest, yere by yere,
The moste party of thy lyve spende
In making of a glorious Legende
Of Gode Wemen, maidenes and wyves,
That were trewe in lovinge al hir lyves;
And telle of false men that hem bitrayen,
That al hir lyf ne doon nat but assayen
How many wemen they may doon a shame;
for in your world that is now holden game.
And thogh thee lesteth nat a lover be,
Spek wel of love; this penance yeve I thee.
And to the god of love I shal so prey,
That he shal charge his servants, by any weye,
To forthren thee, and wel thy labour quyte;
Go now thy wey, thy penance is but lyte.

THE god of love gan smyle, and than he seyde:
Mostow, quod he, wher this be wyf or mayde,
Or quene, or countesse, or of what degree,
That hath so litel penance yeven thee,
That hast deserved sorer for to smerte?
But pitee renneth sone in gentil herte;
That mayst thou seen, she kytheth what she is,
And I answerde: Nay, sir, so have I blis,
No more but that I see wel she is good.

THAT is a trewe tale, by myn hood,
Quod Love, and that thou knowest wel,
pardee,

If hit be so that thou avyse thee,
Hastow nat in a book, lyth in thy cheste,
The grete goodnesse of the quene Alceste,
That turned was into a dayesye:
She that for hir husbonde chees to dye,
And eek to goon to helle, rather than he,
And Ercules rescued hir, pardee,
And broghte hir out of helle agayn to blis?

AND I answerde ageyn, and seyde: Yis,
Now knowe I hir! And is this good Alceste?
The dayesye, and myn owne hertes reste?
Now fele I wel the goodnesse of this wyf,
That bothe after hir deeth, and in hir lyf,
Hir grete bountee doubleth hir renoun!
Wel hath she quit me myn affeccioun
That I have to hir flour, the dayesye!
No wonder is thogh Iove hir stellifye,
As telleth Agaton, for hir goodnesse!

hir whyte coroun berth of hit witesse;
for also many vertues hadde she,
As smale floures in hir coroun be.
In remembrance of hir and in honour,
Cibella made the dayesye and the flour
Yecoroned al with whyt, as men may see;
And Mars yaf to hir coroun reed, pardee.
In stede of rubies, set among the whyte.

PERWITH this quene wex reed for
shame a lyte,
Whan she was preyed so in hir
presence.
Than seyde Love: A ful gret negligence
Was hit to thee, to write unstedfastnesse
Of wemen, sith thou knowest hir goodnesse
By preef, and eek by stories heerbiforn;
Let be the chaf, and wryt wel of the corn.
Whynoldest thou han writen of Alceste,

And leten Criseide been aslepe and reste?
for of Alceste shulde thy wryting be,
Sin that thou wost that kalender is she
Of goodnesse, for she taughte of fyn
lovinge,
And namely of wyfhood the livinge,
And alle the boundes that she oghte kepe;
Thy litel wit was thilke tyme aslepe.
But now I charge thee, upon thy lyf,
That in thy Legend thou make of this wyf,
Whan thou hast othere smale mad before;
And fare now wel, I charge thee no more.
At Cleopatre I wol that thou beginne;
And so forth; and my love so shalt thou
winne.
And with that word of sleep I gan a awake,
And right thus on my Legend gan I make.
Explicit prohemium.

INCIPIT LEGENDA CLEOPATRIE MARTIRIS, EGIPTI
REGINE



THE DEETH OF THOLOMEE THE
king,
That al Egipte hadde in his governing,
Regned his quene Cleopataras;
Cil on a tyme befel ther swiche a cas,
That out of Rome was sent a senatour,
for to conqueren regnes and honour
Unto the toum of Rome, as was usaunce;
To have the world unto her obeisaunce;
And, sooth to seye, Antonius was his name.
So fil hit, as fortune him oghte a shame
Whan he was fallen in prosperitee,
Rebel unto the toum of Rome is he.
And over al this, the suster of Cesar,
He laste hir falsly, er that she was war,
And wolde algates han another wyf;
for whiche he took with Rome and Cesar
stryf.

ATHELES, forsooth, this ilke
senatour
Was a ful worthy gentil werreyour,

And of his deeth hit was ful greet damage.
But love had broght this man in swiche a
rage,
And him so narwe bounden in his las,
Al for the love of Cleopataras,
That al the world he sette at no value.
Him thoughte, nas to him no thing so due
As Cleopatras for to love and serve;
Him roghte nat in armes for to sterve
In the defence of hir, and of hir right.

THIS noble quene eek lovede so this
knight,
Through his desert, & for his chivalrye;
As certainly, but if that bokes lye,
He was, of persone and of gentillesse,
And of discrecioun and hardinesse,
Worthy to any wight that liven may.
And she was fair as is the rose in May.
And, for to maken shortly is the beste,
She wex his wyf, and hadde him as hir leste.

THE wedding and the feste to devyse,
To me, that have ytake swiche
empryse

Of so many a storie for to make,
Hit were to long, lest that I sholde slake
Of thing that bereth more effect and charge;
for men may overlade a ship or barge;
And forthy to theeffect than wol I skippe,
And al the remenant, I wol lete hit slippe.

OCTOVIAN, that wood was of this
dede,
Shoop him an ost on Antony to lede
Alouterly for his destruccioun,
With stoute Romans, cruel as leoun;
To ship they wente, and thus I let hem saile.

ANTONIUS was war, and wol nat faile
To meten with thise Romans, if he
may;
Took eek his reed, and bothe, upon a day,
His wyf and he, and al his ost, forth wente



To shippe anon, no lenger they ne stente;
And in the see hit happed hem to mete,
Up goth the trompe, and for to shoute and
shete,
And peynen hem to sette on with the sonne.
With grisly soun out goth the grete gonne,
And heterly they hurtlen al at ones,
And fro the top down cometh the grete stones.
In goth the grapnel so ful of crokes
Among the ropes, and the shering/hokes.
In with the polax presseth he and he;
Behind the mast beginneth he to flee,
And out agayn, and dryveth him overborde;
He stingeth him upon his speres orde;
He rent the sail with hokes lyke a sythe;
He bringeth the cuppe, and biddeth hem be
blythe;
He poureth pesen upon the hacches slider;
With pottes ful of lym they goon togider;
And thus the longe day in fight they spende
Til, at the laste, as every thing hath ende,
Antony is shent, and put him to the flighte,
And al his folk togo, that best go mighte.

LEETHEE the queen, with al hir
purple sail,
For strokes, which that wente as
thikke as hail;

No wonder was, she mighte hit nat endure,
And whan that Antony saw that aventure,
Allas! quod he, the day that I was born!
My worshippe in this day thus have I lorn!
And for dispeyr out of his witte he sterte,
And roof himself anon throughout the
herte
Er that he farther wente out of the place,
His wyf, that coude of Cesar have no grace,
To Egipte is fled, for drede & for distresse;
But herkneth, ye that speke of kindenesse.
Men, that falsly sweren many an ooth
That ye wol dye, if that your love be
wrooth,
Heer may ye seen of women whiche a trouthe!
This woful Cleopatre hath mad swich routhe
That ther nis tonge noon that may hit telle.
But on the morwe she wol no lenger dwelle,
But made hir subtil werkmen make a shryne
Of alle the rubies and the stones fyne
In al Egipte that she coude espye;
And putte ful the shryne of spycerye,
And leet the cors embaume; & forth she fetre
This dede cors, and in the shryne hit shette.
And next the shryne a pit than doth she
grave;
And alle the serpents that she mighte have,

She putte hem in that grave, and thus she
seyde:
O love, to whom my sorweful herte
obeyde
So ferforthly that, fro that blisful
houre
That I yow swor to been al frely youre,
Imene yow, Antonius my knight!
That never waking, in the day or night,
Ye nere out of myn hertes remembraunce
For wele or wo, for carole or for daunce;
And in myself this covenant made I tho,
That, right swich as ye felten, wele or wo,
As ferforth as hit in my power lay,
Unreprovable unto my wyfhood ay,
The same wolde I felten, lyf or deeth.

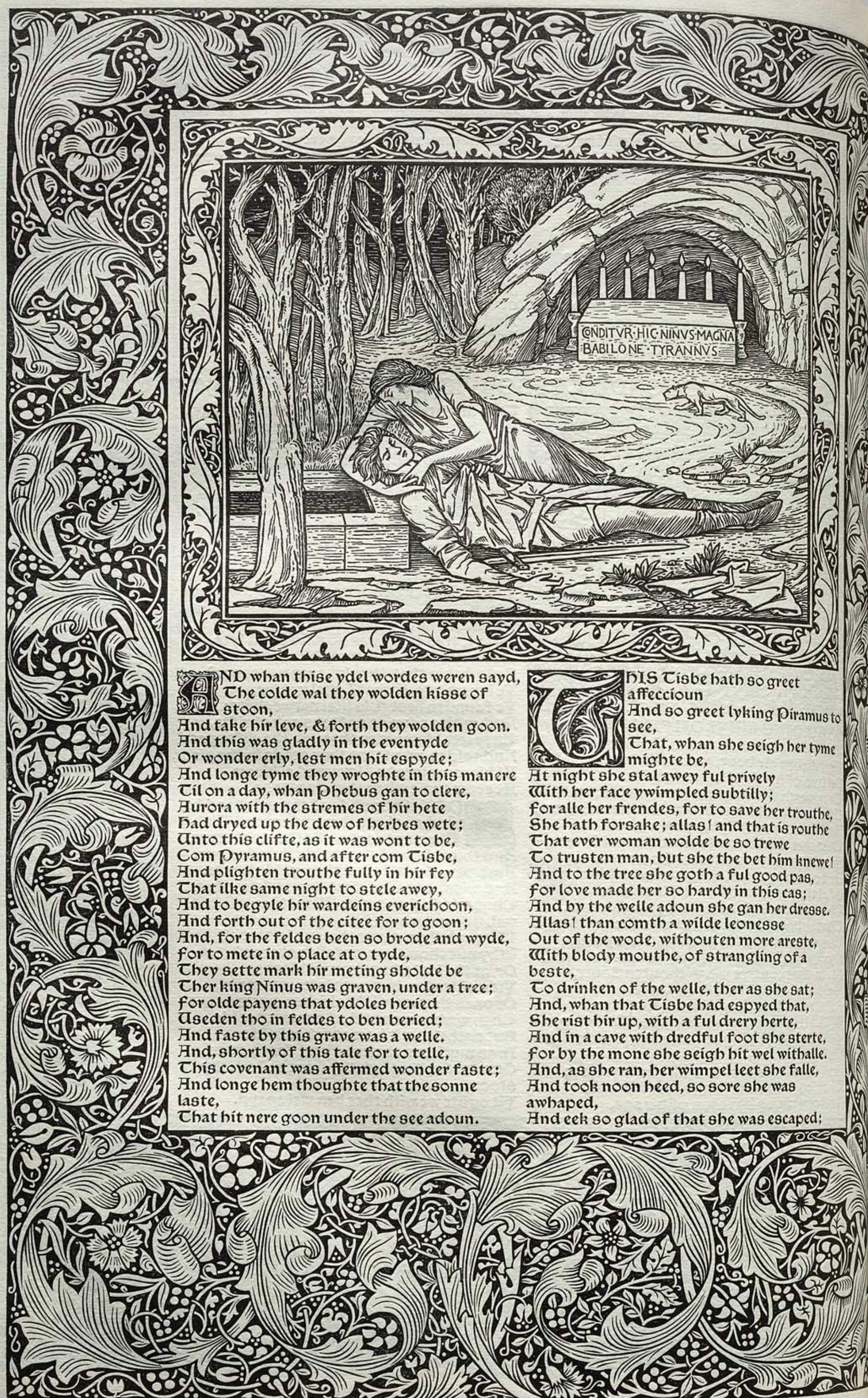
And thilke covenant, whyl me lasteth breeth,
I wol fulfille, and that shal wel be sene;
Was never unto hir love a trewer quene.
And with that word, naked, with ful good
herte,
Among the serpents in the pit she sterte,
And ther she chees to han hir buryinge.
Anoon the neddres gonme her for to stinge,
And she hir deeth receyveth, with good chere,
for love of Antony, that was hir so dere:
And this is storial sooth, hit is no fable.
Now, er I finde a man thus trewe and
stable,
And wol for love his deeth so freely take,
I pray God lat our hedes never ake!
Explicit Legenda Cleopatrie martiris.

INCIPIT LEGENDA TESBE BABILONIE MARTIRIS



BABILOINE WHYL OM FIL IT THUS,
The whiche toun the queen Semiramus
Leet dichen al about, and walles make
ful hye, of harde tyles wel ybake.
Ther weren dwellinge in this noble toun
Two lordes, which that were of greet renoun,
And wonden so nigh, upon a grene,
That ther nas but a stoon/wal hem bitwene,
As ofte in grete tounes is the wone.
And sooth to seyn, that o man hadde a sone,
Of al that lond oon of the lustieste.
That other hadde a doghter, the faireste,
That estward in the world was tho dwellinge.
The name of everich gan to other springe
By women, that were neighbores aboute.
for in that contree yit, withouten doute,
Maidens been ykept, for jelosye,
ful streite, lest they diden som folye.
This yonge man was cleped Piramus,
And Tisbe hight the maid, Naso seith
thus;
And thus by report was hir name yshove
That, as they were in age, wax hir love;
And certain, as by reson of hir age,

Ther mighte have been bitwix hem mariage,
But that hir fadres nolde hit nat assente;
And bothe in love plynke sore they brente,
That noon of alle hir frendes mighte hit
lette
But prively somtyme yit they mette
By sleighte, and spoken som of hir desyr;
As, wry the glee, and hotter is the fyr;
forbede a love, and it is ten so wood.
THIS wal, which that bitwix hem bothe
stood,
Was cloven atwo, right fro the toppe
adoun,
Of olde tyme of his fundacioun;
But yit this clifte was so narwe and lyte,
It nas nat sene, dere ynogh a myte.
But what is that, that love can nat espye?
Ye lovers two, if that I shal nat lye,
Ye founden first this litel narwe clifte;
And, with a soun as softe as any shrifte,
They lete hir wordes through the clifte pace,
And tolden, whyl that they stode in the place,
Al hir compleynt of love, and al hir wo,
At every tyme whan they dorste so.
UPON that o syde of the wal stood he,
And on that other syde stood Tisbe,
The swote soun of other to receyve,
And thus hir wardens wolde they deceyve,
And every day this wal they wolde threte,
And wisse to God, that it were doun ybete.
Thus wolde they seyn: Allas! thou wikked
wal,
Through thyn envye thou us lettest al!
Why nilt thou cleve, or fallen al atwo?
Or, at the leste, but thou woldest so,
Yit woldestow but ones lete us mete,
Or ones that we mighte kissen swete,
Than were we covered of our cares colde.
But natheles, yit be we to thee holde
In as muche as thou suffrest for to goon
Our wordes through thy lyme and eek thy
ston.
Yit oghte we with thee ben wel apayd.



AND whan thise ydel wordes weren sayd,
 The colde wal they wolden kisse of
 stoon,
 And take hir leve, & forth they wolden goon.
 And this was gladly in the eventyde
 Or wonder erly, lest men hit espyde;
 And longe tyme they wroghte in this manere
 Til on a day, whan Phebus gan to clere,
 Aurora with the stremes of hir hete
 Had dryed up the dew of herbes wete;
 Unto this clifte, as it was wont to be,
 Com Pyramus, and after com Tisbe,
 And plighen trouthe fully in hir fey
 That ilke same night to stele away,
 And to begyle hir wardeins everichoon,
 And forth out of the citee for to goon;
 And, for the felde been so brode and wyde,
 for to mete in o place at o tyde,
 They sette mark hir meting sholde be
 Ther king Ninus was graven, under a tree;
 for olde payens that ydoles heried
 Useden tho in felde to ben beried;
 And faste by this grave was a welle.
 And, shortly of this tale for to telle,
 This covenant was affermed wonder faste;
 And longe hem thoughte that the sonne
 laste,
 That hit nere goon under the see adoun.

THIS Tisbe hath so greet
 affeccoun
 And so greet lykyn Pyramus to
 see,
 That, whan she seigh her tyme
 mighte be,
 At night she stal away ful prively
 With her face ywimpled subtilly;
 for alle her frendes, for to save her trouthe,
 She hath forsake; alas! and that is routhe
 That ever woman wolde be so trewe
 To trusten man, but she the bet him knewe!
 And to the tree she goth a ful good pas,
 for love made her so hardy in this cas;
 And by the welle adoun she gan her dresse.
 Alas! than comth a wilde leonesse
 Out of the wode, withouten more areste,
 With bloody mouth, of strangling of a
 beste,
 To drinken of the welle, ther as she sat;
 And, whan that Tisbe had espyed that,
 She rist hir up, with a ful drery herte,
 And in a cave with dredful foot she sterte,
 for by the mone she seigh hit wel withalle.
 And, as she ran, her wimpel leet she falle,
 And took noon heed, so sore she was
 awbaped,
 And eek so glad of that she was escaped;

And thus she sit, and darketh wonder stille.
 Whan that this leonesse hath dronke her fille,
 Aboute the welle gan she for to winde,
 And right anon the wimpel gan she finde,
 And with her bloody mouth hit al torete.
 Whan this was doon, no lenger she ne stente,
 But to the wode her wey than hath she nome.
AND, at the laste, this Pyramus is come,
 But al to longe, alas! at hoom was he.
 The mone shoon, men mighte wel ysee,
 And in his weye, as that he com ful faste,
 his eye to the grounde adoun he caste,
 And in the sonde, as he beheld adoun,
 he seigh the stepes brode of a leoun,
 And in his herte he sodeinly agroos,
 And pale he wex, therwith his her aroos,
 And neer he com, and fond the wimpel torn.
 Alas! quod he, the day that I was born!
 This o night wol us lovers bothe slee!
 How sholde I axen mercy of Tisbe
 Whan I am he that have yow slain, alas!
 My bidding hath yow slain, as in this cas.
 Alas! to bidde a woman goon by nighte
 In place ther as peril fallen mighte,
 And I so slow! alas, I ne hadde be
 here in this place a furlong wey or ye!
 Now what leoun that be in this foreste,
 My body mote he renden, or what beste
 That wilde is, gnawen mote he now myn herte!
 And with that worde he to the wimpel sterte,
 And kiste hit ofte, and weep on hit ful sore,
 And seide: Wimpel, alas, ther nis no more
 But thou shalt fele as wel the blood of me
 As thou hast felt the bleding of Tisbe!
 And with that worde he smoot him to the
 herte.
 The blood out of the wounde as brode sterte
 As water, whan the conduit broken is.
AND Tisbe, which that wiste nat of this,
 But sitting in her drede, she thoghte thus:
 If hit so falle that my Pyramus
 Be comen hider, and may me nat yfinde,
 he may me holden fals and eek unkinde.
 And out she comth, and after him gan espyen
 Bothe with her herte and with her yen,
 And thoghte, I wol him tellen of my drede
 Bothe of the leonesse and al my dede.
 And at the laste her love than hath she founde
 Beting with his heles on the grounde,
 Al bloody, and therwith abak she sterte,
 And lyke the waves quappe gan her herte,
 And pale as box she wex, and in a throwe
 Arysed her, and gan him wel to knowe,
 That hit was Pyramus, her herte dere.
 Who coude wryte whiche a deedly chere
 hath Tisbe now, and how her heer she rente,

And how she gan herselfe to turmente,
 And how she lyth and swowneth on the grounde,
 And how she weep of teres ful his wounde,
 How medeleth she his blood with her compleynte,
 And with his blood herselfen gan she peynte;
 How clippeth she the dede cors, alas!
 How doth this woful Tisbe in this cas!
 How kisseth she his frosty mouth so cold!
 Who hath doon this, & who hath been so bold
 To sleen my leef? O speke, my Pyramus!
 I am thy Tisbe, that thee calleth thus!
 And therwithal she lifteth up his heed.
THIS woful man, that was nat fully deed,
 Whan that he herde the name of Tisbe cryen,
 On her he caste his hevvy deedly yen
 And down again, and yeldeth up the gost.
TISBE rist up, withouten noise or bost,
 And seigh her wimpel and his empty
 shethe,
 And eek his sward, that him hath doon to dethe;
 Than spak she thus: My woful hand, quod she,
 Is strong ynogh in swiche a werk to me;
 for love shal yive me strengthe and hardinesse
 To make my wounde large ynogh, I gesse.
 I wol thee folwen deed, and I wol be
 felawe and cause eek of thy deeth, quod she.
 And thogh that nothing save the deeth only
 Mighte thee fro me departe trewely,
 Thou shalt no more departe now fro me
 Than fro the deeth, for I wol go with thee!
AND now, ye wretched jealous fadres oure,
 We, that weren whylom children youre,
 We prayen yow, withouten more envye,
 That in o grave yfere we moten lye,
 Sin love hath brought us to this pitous ende!
 And rightwis God to every lover sende,
 That loveth trewely, more prosperitee
 Than ever hadde Pyramus and Tisbe!
 And lat no gentil woman her assure
 To putten her in swiche an aventure.
 But God forbode but a woman can
 Been as trewe and loving as a man!
 And, for my part, I shal anon it kythe!
 And, with that worde, his sward she took as
 swythe,
 That warm was of her loves blood and hoot,
 And to the herte she herselfen smoot.
AND thus ar Tisbe and Pyramus ago.
 Of trewe men I finde but fewe mo.
 In alle my bokes, save this Pyramus,
 And therfor have I spoken of him thus.
 for hit is deyntee to us men to finde
 A man that can in love be trewe and kinde.
 Heer may ye seen, what lover so he be,
 A woman dar and can as wel as he.
 Explicit legenda Tesbe.

The
 Legend of
 Goode
 Wimmen

INCIPIT LEGENDA DIDONIS MARTIRIS. CARTAGINIS
REGINE



AND HONOUR, VIRGIL MANTUAN,
Be to thy name! and I shal, as I can,
felow thy lantern, as thou gost biforn,
How Eneas to Dido was forsworn.
In thyn Eneid and Naso wol I take
The tenour, and the grete effectes make.

WHAN Troye brought was to destruccoun
By Grekes sleighte, and namely
by Sinoun,
feyning the hors yoffred to Minerve,
Through which that many a Troyan moste
sterve;
And Ector had, after his deeth, appered,
And fyr so wood, it mighte nat be stered,
In al the noble tour of Ilioun,
That of the citee was the cheef dungeoun;
And al the contree was so lowe ybrought,
And Priamus the king fordoon and noght;
And Eneas was charged by Venus
To fleen away, he took Ascanius,
That was his sone, in his right hand, and
fledde;
And on his bakke he bar and with him ledde
his olde fader, cleped Anchises,
And by the weye his wyf Creusa he lees.
And mochel sorwe hadde he in his minde
Er that he coude his felawshippe finde.
But, at the laste, whan he had hem founde,
He made him redy in a certein stounde,
And to the see ful faste he gan him hye,

And sailleth forth with al his companye
Toward Itale, as wolde destinee.
But of his adventures in the see
Nis nat to purpos for to speke of here,
For hit acordeth nat to my matere.
But, as I seide, of him and of Dido
Shal be my tale, til that I have do.
So longe he sailed in the salte see
Til in Libye unnethe aryved he,
With shippes seven and with no more navye;
And glad was he to londe for to hye,
So was he with the tempest al toshake.
And whan that he the haven had ytake,
He had a knight, was called Achates;
And him of al his felawshippe he chees
To goon with him, the contre for teapye;
He took with him no more companye.
But forth they goon, and lafte his shippes ryde,
his fere and he, withouten any gyde.
So longe he walketh in this wilderness
Til, at the laste, he mette a hunteresse.
A bowe in honde and arwes hadde she,
Her clothes cutted were unto the knee;
But she was yit the fairest creature
That ever was yformed by nature;
And Eneas and Achates she grette,
And thus she to hem spak, whan she hem mette.
Sawe ye, quod she, as ye han walked wyde,
Any of my austren walke yow besyde,
With any wilde boor or other beste
That they han hunted to, in this foreste,
Ytukked up, with arwes in her cas?
Nay, soothly, lady, quod this Eneas;
But, by thy beaute, as hit thinketh me,
Thou mightest never erthely womman be,
But Phebus suster artow, as I gesse.
And, if so be that thou be a goddesse,
Have mercy on our labour and our wo.

WHAN no goddes, soothly, quod she tho;
For maidens walken in this contree here,
With arwes and with bowe, in this manere.
This is the regne of Libie, ther ye been,
Of which that Dido lady is and queen.
And shortly tolde him al the occasioun
Why Dido com into that region,
Of which as now me lusteth nat to ryme;
Hit nedeth nat; hit nere but los of tyme.
For this is al and som, it was Venus,
his owne moder, that spak with him thus;
And to Cartage she bad he sholde him dighte,
And vanished anon out of his sighte.
I coude folwe, word for word, Virgyle,
But it wolde lasten al to longe a whyle.

THIS noble queen, that cleped was Dido,
That whylom was the wyf of Sitheo,
That fairer was then is the bryghte sonne,
This noble toun of Cartage hath begonne;
In which she regneth in so greet honour,
That she was holde of alle quenes flour,
Of gentillesse, of freedom, of beautee;
That wel was him that mighte her ones see;
Of kinges and of lordes so desyred,
That al the world her beaute hadde yfyred;

She stood so wel in every wightes grace.
WHAN Eneas was come unto that place,
Unto the maister temple of al the toun
Ther Dido was in her devocioun,
ful prively his wey than hath he nome.
Whan he was in the large temple come,
I can nat seyn if that hit be possible,
But Venus hadde him made invisible;
Thus seith the book, withouten any lees.
And whan this Eneas and Achates
hadden in this temple been overal,
Than founde they, depeynt on a wal,
How Troye and al the lond destroyed was.
Allas! that I was born, quod Eneas,
Throughout the world our shame is hid so wyde,
Now it is peynted upon every syde!
We, that weren in prosperitee,
Be now disslaundred, and in swich degre,
No lenger for to liven I ne kepe!
And, with that worde, he brast out for to wepe
So tendrely, that routhe hit was to sene.
This fresshe lady, of the citee quene,
Stood in the temple, in her estat royal,
So richely, and eek so fair withal,
So yong, so lusty, with her eyen glade,
That, if that God, that heven and erthe made,
Wolde han a love, for beaute and goodnesse,
And womanhod, and trouthe, and seemlinesse,
Whom sholde he loven but this lady swete?
There nis no womman to him half so mete.

FORTUNE, that hath the world in govern-
aunce,
Hath soddeinly brought in so newe a chaunce,
That never was ther yit so fremd a cas.
for al the companye of Eneas,
Which that he wende han loren in the see,
Aryved is, nat fer fro that citee;
for which, the grettest of his lordes some
By aventure ben to the citee come,
Unto that same temple, for to seke
The quene, and of her socour her beseke;
Swich renoun was ther spronge of her goodnesse.
And, whan they hadden told al hir distresse,
And al hir tempest and hir harde cas,
Unto the quene appered Eneas,
And openly beknew that hit was he.
Who hadde joye than but his meynee,
That hadden founde hir lord, hir governour?

THE quene saw theydide him swich honour,
And had herd ofte of Eneas, er tho,
And in her herte she hadde routhe and wo
That ever swich a noble man as he
Shal been disherited in swich degre;
And saw the man, that he was lyk a knight,
And suffisaunt of persone and of might,
And lyk to been a veray gentil man;
And wel his wordes he besette can,
And had a noble visage for the nones,
And formed wel of braunes and of bones.
for, after Venus, hadde he swich fairnesse,
That no man might be half so fair, I gesse.
And wel a lord he semed for to be.
And, for he was a straunger, somewhat she

The
Legend of
Goode
Wimmen

Lyked him the bet, as, God do bote,
To som folk ofte newe thing is swote.
Anoon her herte hath pitee of his wo,
And, with that pitee, love com in also;
And thus, for pitee and for gentillesse,
Refresshed moste he been of his distresse.
She seide, certes, that she sory was
That he hath had swich peril and swich cas;
And, in her frendly speche, in this manere
She to him spak, and seide as ye may here.
HE ye nat Venus sone and Anchises?
In good feith, al the worship and encrees
That I may goodly doon yow, ye shul have.
Your shippes and your meynce shal I save;
And many a gentil word she spak him to;
And comaunded her messageres go
The same day, withouten any faile,
His shippes for to seke, and hem vitaille.
She many a beste to the shippes sente,
And with the wyn she gan hem to presente;
And to her royal paleys she her spedde,
And Eneas alwey with her she ledde.
What nedeth yow the feste to descryve?
He never beter at ese was his lyve.
ful was the feste of deyntees and richesse,
Of instruments, of song, and of gladnesse,
And many an amorous lokyng and devys.
HIS Eneas is come to Paradys
Out of the swolow of helle, & thus in joye
Remembreth him of his estat in Troye.
To dauncing, chambres ful of parements,
Of riche beddes, and of ornaments,
This Eneas is lad, after the mete.
And with the quene whan that he had sete,
And spyces parted, and the wyn agoon,
Unto his chambres was he lad anoon.
To take his ese and for to have his reste,
With al his folk, to doon what so hem leste.
HER nas coursere wel ybrydled noon,
Ne stede, for the justyng wel to goon,
Ne large palfrey, esy for the nones,
Ne juwel, fretted ful of riche stones,
Ne sakkes ful of gold, of large wighte,
Ne ruby noon, that shynede by nighte,
Ne gentil hautein faucon heronere,
Ne hound, for hert or wilde boor or dere,
Ne coupe of gold, with florins newe ybete,
That in the lond of Libie may be gete,
That Dido ne hath hit Eneas ysent;
And al is payed, what that he hath spent.
Thus can this noble quene her gestes calle,
As she that can in freedom passen alle.
ENEAS sothly eek, withouten lees,
Hath sent unto his shippe, by Achates,
After his sone, and after riche thinges,
Both ceptre, clothes, broches, and eek ringes,
Som for to were, and som for to presente
To her, that al thise noble thinges him sente;
And bad his sone, how that he sholde make
The presenting, and to the quene hit take.
REPAIRED is this Achates again,
And Eneas ful blisful is and fain
To seen his yonge sone Ascanius.

But natheles, our autour telleth us,
That Cupido, that is the god of love,
At preyere of his moder, hye above,
Hadde the lyknes of the child ytake,
This noble quene enamoured to make
On Eneas; but, as of that scripture,
Be as he may, I make of hit no cure.
But sooth is this, the quene hath mad swich chere
Unto this child, that wonder is to here;
And of the present that his fader sente
She thanked him ful ofte, in good entente.
HIS is this quene in plesaunce & in joye,
With al this newe lusty folk of Troye.
And of the dedes hath she more enquired
Of Eneas, and al the story lered
Of Troye; and al the longe day they tweye
Entendeden to speken and to pleye;
Of which ther gan to bredden swich a fyr,
That sely Dido hath now swich desyr
With Eneas, her newe gest, to dele,
That she hath lost her hewe, and eek her bele.
Now to the effect, now to the fruit of al,
Why I have told this story, and tellen shal.
HIS I beginne; hit fil, upon a night,
When that the mone upreysed had her light,
This noble quene unto her reste wente;
She syketh sore, and gan herself turmente.
She waketh, walweth, maketh many a brawd,
As doon thise loveres, as I have herd sayd.
And at the laste, unto her suster Anne
She made her moon, & right thus spak she thame.
OU, dere suster myn, what may hit be
That me agasteth in my dreame? quod she.
This ilke Troyan is so in my thought,
for that me thinketh he is so wel ywroght,
And eek so lykly for to be a man,
And therewithal so mikel good he can,
That al my love and lyf lyth in his cure.
Have ye not herd him telle his aventure?
Now certes, Anne, if that ye rede hit me,
I wolde fain to him ywedded be;
This is the effect; what sholde I more seye?
In him lyth al, to do me live or deye.
HER suster Anne, as she that coude her good,
Seide as her thoughte, and somdel hit with-
stood.
But herof was so long a sermonyng,
Hit were to long to make rehersyng;
But fynally, hit may not been withstonde;
Love wol love, for no wight wol hit wonde.
HE dawening uprist out of the see;
This amorous quene chargeth her meynce
The nettes dresse, and speres brode & hene;
An hunting wol this lusty fresshe quene;
So priketh her this newe joly wo.
To hors is al her lusty folk ygo;
Unto the court the houndes been ybrought,
And upon coursers, swift as any thought,
Her yonge knightes hoven al aboute,
And of her wommen eek an huge route.
Upon a thikke palfrey, paper whyt,
With sadel rede, enbrouded with delyt,
Of gold the barres up/enbossed hye,

Sit Dido, al in gold and perre wrye;
And she is fair, as is the brighte morwe,
That he leth seke folk of nightes sorwe.
DON a courser, startyng as the fyr,
Men mighte turne him with a litel wyr,
Sit Eneas, lyk Phebus to devyse;
So was he fresshe arayed in his wyse.
The fomy brydel with the bit of gold
Governeth he, right as himself hath wold.
And forth this noble quene thus lat I ryde
An hunting, with this Troyan by her syde.
HE herd of hertes fouden is anoon,
With: hey! go bet! prik thou! lat goon, lat
goon!
Why nil the leoun comen or the bere,
That I mighte ones mete him with this spere?
Thus seyn thise yonge folk, and up they kille
These hertes wilde, and han hem at hir wille.
RONG al this to romblen gan the heven,
The thunder rored with a grisly steven;
Doun com the rain, with hail & sleet so faste,
With hevynes fyr, that hit so sore agaste
This noble quene, and also her meynce,
That ech of hem was glad away to flee.
And shortly, fro the tempest her to save,
She fledde herself into a litel cave,
And with her wente this Eneas also;
Inoot, with hem if ther wente any mo;
The autour maketh of hit no mencion.
And heer began the depe affeccion
Betwix hem two; this was the firste morwe
Of her gladnesse, and ginning of her sorwe.
for ther hath Eneas ykneled so,
And told her al his herte, and al his wo,
And sworn so depe, to her to be trewe,
for wele or wo, and chauce for no newe,
That sely Dido rewed on his peyne,
And took him for husband, to been his wyf
for evermo, whyl that hem laste lyf.
And after this, whan that the tempest stente,
With mirth out as they comen, hoom they wente.
HE wikked fame up roos, and that anon,
How Eneas hath with the quene ygon
Into the cave; and demed as hem liste;
And whan the king, that Yarbass hight, hit wiste,
As he that had her loved ever his lyf,
And wowed her, to have her to his wyf,
Swich sorwe as he hath maked, and swich chere,
Hit is a routhe and pitee for to here.
But, as in love, alday hit happeth so,
That oon shal laughen at anothers wo;
Now laugheth Eneas, and is in joye
And more richesse than ever he was in Troye.
SELY womman, ful of innocence,
ful of pitee, of trouthe, and conscience,
What maketh yow to men to trusten so?
Have ye swich routhe upon hir feined wo,
And han swich olde ensamples yow befor?
See ye nat alle, how they been forsworn?
Wher see ye oon, that he ne hath laft his leef,
Or been unkinde, or doon her som mischeef,
Or pilled her, or bosted of his dede?

Ye may as wel hit seen, as ye may rede;
Tak heed now of this grete gentilman,
This Troyan, that so wel her plesen can,
That feineth him so trewe and obeising,
So gentil and so privy of his doing,
And can so wel doon alle his obeisaunces,
And waiten her at festes and at daunces,
And whan she goth to temple and hoom ageyn,
And fasten til he hath his lady seyn,
And bere in his devyses, for her sake,
Noot I nat what; and songes wolde he make,
Justen, and doon of armes many thinges,
Sende her lettres, tokens, broches, ringes,
Now herkneth, how he shal his lady serve!
Theras he was in peril for to sterve
for hunger, and for mischeef in the see,
And desolat, and fled from his contree,
And al his folk with tempest al todriven,
She hath her body and eek her reame yiven
Into his hond, theras she mighte have been
Of other lond than of Cartage a queen,
And lived in joye ynogh; what wolde ye more?
HIS Eneas, that hath so depe yswore,
Is wery of his craft within a throwe;
The hote earnest is al overblowe.
And prively he doth his shippes dighte,
And shapeth him to stele away by nighte.
HIS Dido hath suspicioun of this,
And thoughte wel, that hit was al amis;
for in his bedde he lyth anight & syketh;
She asketh him anoon, what him mistyketh:
My dere herte, which that I love most?
Certes, quod he, this night my fadres gost
Hath in my sleep so sore me tormented,
And eek Mercurie his message hath presented,
That nedes to the conquest of Itaille
My destinee is sone for to saile;
for which, me thinketh, brosten is myn herte!
Therwith his false teres out they sterte;
And taketh her within his armes two.
IS that in earnest, quod she; wil ye so?
Have ye nat sworn to wyve me to take,
Alas! what womman wil ye of me make?
I am a gentilwoman and a queen,
Ye wil nat fro your wyf thus foule fleen?
That I was born! alas! what shal I do?
O telle in short, this noble queen Dido,
She seketh halwes, and doth sacrificyng;
She kneleth, cryeth, that routhe is to devyse;
Conjureth him, and profreth him to be
his thral, his servant in the leste gree;
She falleth him to fote, and swowneth there
Dischevele, with her brighte gilte here,
And seith: Have mercy! let me with yow ryde!
Thise lordes, which that wemen me besyde
Wil me destroyen only for your sake.
And, so ye wil me now to wyve take,
As ye han sworn, than wol I yive yow leve
To sleen me with your sward now sone at eve!
for than yit shal I dyen as your wyf.
I am with childe, and yive my child his lyf.
O mercy, lord! have pite in your thoght!
But al this thing availleth her right noght;

for on a night, slepinge, he let her lye,
And stal away unto his companye,
And, as a traitour, forth he gan to saile
Toward the large contree of Itale.
Thus hath he laft Dido in wo and pyne;
And wedded ther a lady hight Lavyne.

A CLOTH he lafte, and eek his swerd
standing,

Whan he fro Dido stal in her sleping,
Right at her beddes heed, so gan he hie
Whan that he stal away to his navye;
Which cloth, whan sely Dido gan awake,
She hath hit kist ful ofte for his sake;
And seide: O cloth, whyl Jupiter hit leste,
Tak now my soule, unbind me of this unreste!
I have fulfild of fortune al the cours.

And thus, alas! withouten his socours,
Twenty tyme yswowned hath she thanne.
And, whan that she unto her suster Anne
Compleyned had, of which I may nat wryte,
So greet a routhe I have hit for tendyte,
And bad her norice and her suster goon
To fecchen fyr and other thing anon,
And seide, that she wolde sacrifice.

And, whan she mighte her tyme wel espye,
Upon the fyr of sacrificys she sterte,
And with his swerd she roof her to the herte.

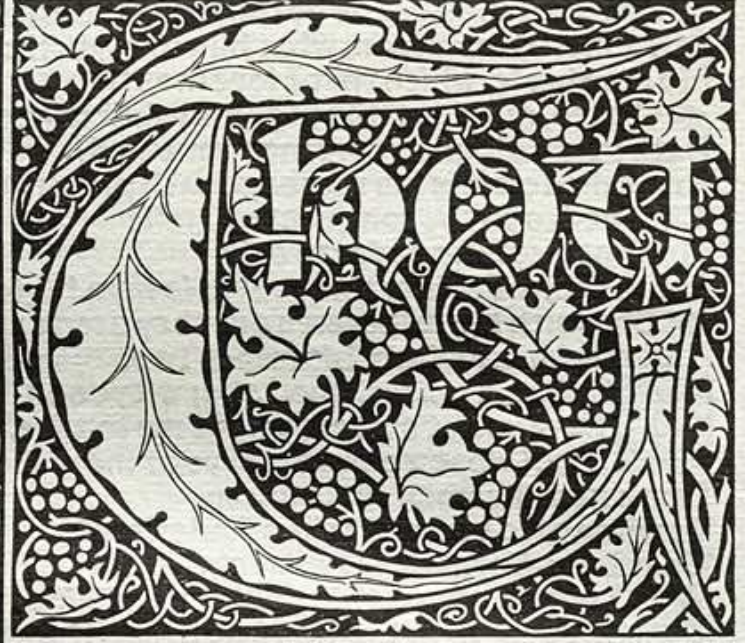
A T, as myn autour seith, right thus
she seyde;

Or she was hurt, before that she deyde,
She wroot a lettre anon, that thus began:
Right so, quod she, as that the whyte
swan

Ayeins his deeth beginneth for to singe,
Right so to yow make I my compleyninge.
Nat that I trowe to geten yow again,
for wel I woote that it is al in vain,
Sin that the goddes been contraire to me.
But sin my name is lost through yow, quod
she,

I may wel lese a word on yow, or letter,
Albeit that I shal be never the better;
for thilke wind that blew your ship away,
The same wind hath blowe away your fey.
But who wol at this letter have in minde,
Rede Ovide, and in him he shal hit finde.
**Explicit Legenda Didonis martiris, Car-
taginis regine.**

INCIPIT LEGENDA YSIPHILE ET MEDEE MARTIRUM.



MOTE OF FALSE LOVERS, DUK JA-
SOON!

Thou sly devourer and confusioun
Of gentilwomen, tender creatures,
Thou madest thy reclaiming and thy lures
To ladies of thy statly apparaunce,
And of thy wordes, farced with plesaunce,
And of thy feyned trouthe and thy manere,
With thyn obeisaunce and thy humble chere,
And with thy counterfeted peyne and wo.
Ther other falsen oon, thou falsest two!
O! ofte swore thou that thou woldest dye
for love, whan thou ne feltest maladye
Save foul delyt, which that thou callest love!
If that I live, thy name shal be shove
In English, that thy sleighte shal be knowe!

Have at thee, Jasoun! now thyn horn is blowe
But certes, hit is bothe routhe and wo
That love with false loveres werketh so;
for they shul have wel better love and chere
Than he that hath aboght his love ful dere,
Or had in armes many a bloody box,
for ever as tendre a capoun et the fox,
Thogh he be fals and hath the foul betrayed,
As shal the goodman that therfor hath payed;
Al have he to the capoun skille and right,
The false fox wol have his part at night,
On Jasoun this ensample is wel ysene
By Isiphile and Medea the quene.

IN Tessalye, as Guido telleth us,
Ther was a king that highte Pelleus,
That had a brother, which that highte
Eson;

And, whan for age he mighte unnethes gon,
He yaf to Pelleus the governing
Of al his regne, and made him lord and king.
Of which Eson this Jasoun geten was,
That, in his tyme, in al that lond, ther nas
Nat swich a famous knight of gentilesse,
Of freedom, & of strengthe and lustinesse.
After his fader deeth, he bar him so
That ther nas noon that liste been his fo,
But dide him al honour and companye;
Of which this Pelleus hath greet envye,
Imagining that Jasoun mighte be
Enhaunsed so, and put in swich degre
With love of lordes of his regoun,
That from his regne he may be put adoun.
And in his wit, anight, compassed he
How Jasoun mighte best destroyed be
Withoute slaunder of his compasment.



And at the laste he took avisement
To senden him into some fer contree
Ther as this Jasoun may destroyed be.
This was his wit; al made he to Jasoun
Gret chere of love and of affeccoun,
for drede lest his lordes hit espyde.
So fil hit so, as fame renneith wyde,
Ther was swich tyding overal and swich los,
That in an yle that called was Colcos,
Beyonde Troye, estward in the see,
That therin was a ram, that men mighte see,
That had a flees of gold, that shoon so
bryght,
That nowher was ther swich another sighte;
But hit was kept alway with a dragoun,
And many othere mervells, up and doun,
That spitten fyr, and moche thing ther was.
But this was eek the tale, natheles,
That whoso wolde winne thilke flees,
He moste bothe, or he hit winne mighte,
With the boles and the dragoun fighte;
And king Oetes lord was of that yle.

HIS Pelleus bethoghte upon this
wyle;
That he his newew Jasoun wolde
enhorten
To sailen to that lond, him to disporte,

And seide: Newew, if hit mighte be
That swich a worship mighte fallen thee,
That thou this famous tresor mightest
winne,
And bringen hit my regoun withinne,
Hit were to me gret plesaunce and honour;
Than were I holde to quyte thy labour.
And al the cost I wol myselven make;
And chees what folk that thou wilt with thee
take;
Lat see now, darstow taken this viage?

Jasoun was yong, and lusty of corage,
And undertook to doon this ilke emprise.
With Jasoun wente the stronge
Ercules,
And many another that he with him chees.
But whoso axeth who is with him gon,
Lat him go reden Argonauticon,
for he wol telle a tale long ynow.
Philotes anon the sail updrow,
Whan that the wind was good, and gan him
hye

Out of his contree called Tessalye.
So long he sailed in the salte see
Til in the yle Lemnoun arryved he,
Al be this nat rehersed of Guido,
Yet seith Ovyde in his Epistles so.

And of this yle lady was and quene
The faire yonge Isiphilee, the shene,
That whylom Thoas doghter was, the king.

ISIPHILEE was goon in her playing;
And, roming on the clyves by the see,
Under a banke anon espyed she
Wher that the ship of Jasoun gan aryve.
Of her goodnesse adoun she sendeth blyve
To witen yif that any straunge wight
With tempest thider were yblowe anight,
To doon him socour; as was her usaunce
To forthren every wight, and doon plesaunce
Of veray bountee and of curtesye.

HIS messagere adoun him gan to hye,
And fond Jasoun, and Ercules also,
That in a cogge to londe were ygo
Hem to refreschen and to take the eyr.
The morwening atempre was and fair;
And in his wey the messagere hem mette.
ful cunningly thise lordes two he grette,
And dide his message, axing hem anon
Yif they were broken, or oght wo begoon,
Or hadde nede of lodesmen or vitaille;
for of socour they shulde nothing faile,
for hit was utterly the quenes wille.

JASOUN answerde, mekely and stille:
My lady, quod he, thanke I hertely
Of hir goodnesse; us nedeth, trewely,
Nothing as now, but that we wery be,
And come for to pleye, out of the see,
Til that the wind be better in our weye.

HIS lady rometh by the clif to pleye,
With her meynec, endelong the stronde.
And fynt this Jasoun and this other stonde,
In spekinge of this thing, as I yow tolde.

HIS Ercules and Jasoun gan beholde
How that the quene hit was, and faire her
grette
Anon right as they with this lady mette;
And she took heed, and knew, by hir manere,
By hir aray, by wordes and by chere,
That hit were gentilmen, of greet degree.
And to the castel with her ledeth she
Thise straunge folk, and doth hem greet honour,
And axeth hem of travail and labour
That they han suffred in the salte see;
So that, within a day, or two, or three,
She knew, by folk that in his shippes be,
That hit was Jasoun, ful of renomee,
And Ercules, that had the grete los,
That soghten the adventures of Colcos;
And dide hem honour more then before,
And with hem deled ever lenger the more,
for they ben worthy folk, withouten lees.
And namely, most she spak with Ercules;
To him her herte bar, he sholde be
Sad, wys, and trewe, of wordes avisee,
Withouten any other affeccoun
Of love, or evil imaginacioun.

HIS Ercules hath so this Jasoun preyed,
That to the sonne he hath him up areysed,
That half so trewe a man ther nas of love
Under the cope of heven that is above;

And he was wys, hardy, secree, and riche.
Of thise three pointes ther nas noon himliche;
Of freedom passed he, and lustihede,
Alle tho that liven or ben dede;
Therto so greet a gentilman was he,
And of Tessalie lykly king to be.
Ther nas no lak, but that he was agast
To love, and for to speke shamefast.
He hadde lever himself to mordre, and dye
Than that men shulde a lover him espye;
As wolde almighty God that I had yive
My blood and flesh, so that I mighte live,
With the nones that he hadde owher a wyf
for his estat; for swich a lusty lyf
She sholde lede with this lusty knight!

AND al this was compassed on the night
Betwix him Jasoun and this Ercules.
Of thise two heer was mad a shrewed leas
To come to hous upon an innocent;
for to bedote this quene was hir assent.
And Jasoun is as coy as is a maide,
He loketh pitously, but noght he saide,
But frely yaf he to her conseileres
Yiftes grete, and to her officers.

As wolde God I leiser hadde, and tyme,
By proces al his wowing for to ryme.
But in this hous if any fals lover be,
Right as himself now doth, right so dide he,
With feyning and with every sotil dede.
Ye gete no more of me, but ye wil rede
Thoriginal, that telleth al the cas.

HE somme is this, that Jasoun wedded was
Unto this quene, and took of her substance
Whatso him liste, unto his purveyaunce;
And upon her begat he children two,
And drow his sail, and saw her nevermo.

LETTRE sente she to him certein,
Which were to long to wryten and to sein,
And him repreveth of his grete untrouthe,
And preyeth him on her to have som routhe.
And of his children two, she seide him this,
That they be lyke, of alle thing, ywis,
To Jasoun, save they coude nat begyle;
And preyed God, or hit were longe whyle,
That she, that had his herte yraft her fro,
Moste finden him to her untrewed also,
And that she moste bothe her children spille,
And alle tho that suffreth him his wille,
And trewe to Jasoun was she al her lyf,
And ever kepeth her chast, as for his wyf;
Ne never had she joye at her herte,
But dyed, for his love, of sorwes smerte.



Colcos comen is this duk
Jasoun,
That is of love devourer and
dragoun.
As matere appetyteth forme
alwey,
And from forme into forme
hit passen may,
Or as a welle that were
botomlees,

Right so can this fals Jasoun have no pees.
For, to desyren, through his appetyt,
To doon with gentil wimmen his delyt,
To is his lust and his felicitye.

JASOUN is romed forth to the citee,
That whylom cleped was Jaconitos,
That was the maister toun of al Colcos,
And hath ytolde the cause of his coming
Unto Oetes, of that contre king,
Preying him that he moste doon his assay
To gete the flees of gold, if that he may;
Of which the king assenteth to his bone,
And doth him honour, as hit is to done,
So ferforth, that his doghter and his eyr,
Medea, which that was so wys and fair,
That fairer saw ther never man with ye,
He made her doon to Jasoun compagne
At mete, and sitte by him in the halle.

MEDEA was Jasoun a semely man withalle,
And lyk a lord, and had a greet renoun,
And of his loke as real as leoun,
And goodly of his speche, and famulere,
And coude of love al craft and art plener
Withoute boke, with everich observaunce.
And, as fortune her oghte a foul meschaunce,
She wex enamoured upon this man.

JASOUN, quod she, for ought I see or can,
As of this thing the which ye been aboute,
Ye han yourself yput in moche doute.

for, whoso wol this aventure acheve,
He may nat wel asterten, as I leve,
Withouten deeth, but I his helpe be.
But natheles, hit is my wille, quod she,
To forthren yow, so that ye shal nat dye,
But turnen, sound, hoom to your Tessalye.

Righte lady, quod this Jasoun tho,
That ye han of my dethe or of my wo
Any reward, and doon me this honour,
I wot wel that my might ne my labour
May nat deserve hit in my lyves day;
God thanke yow, ther I ne can ne may.
Your man am I, and lowly you beseeche,
To been my help, withoute more speche;
But certes, for my deeth shal I nat spare.

HO gan this Medea to him declare
The peril of this cas, fro point to point,
And of his batail, and in what disjoint
He mote stande, of which no creature,

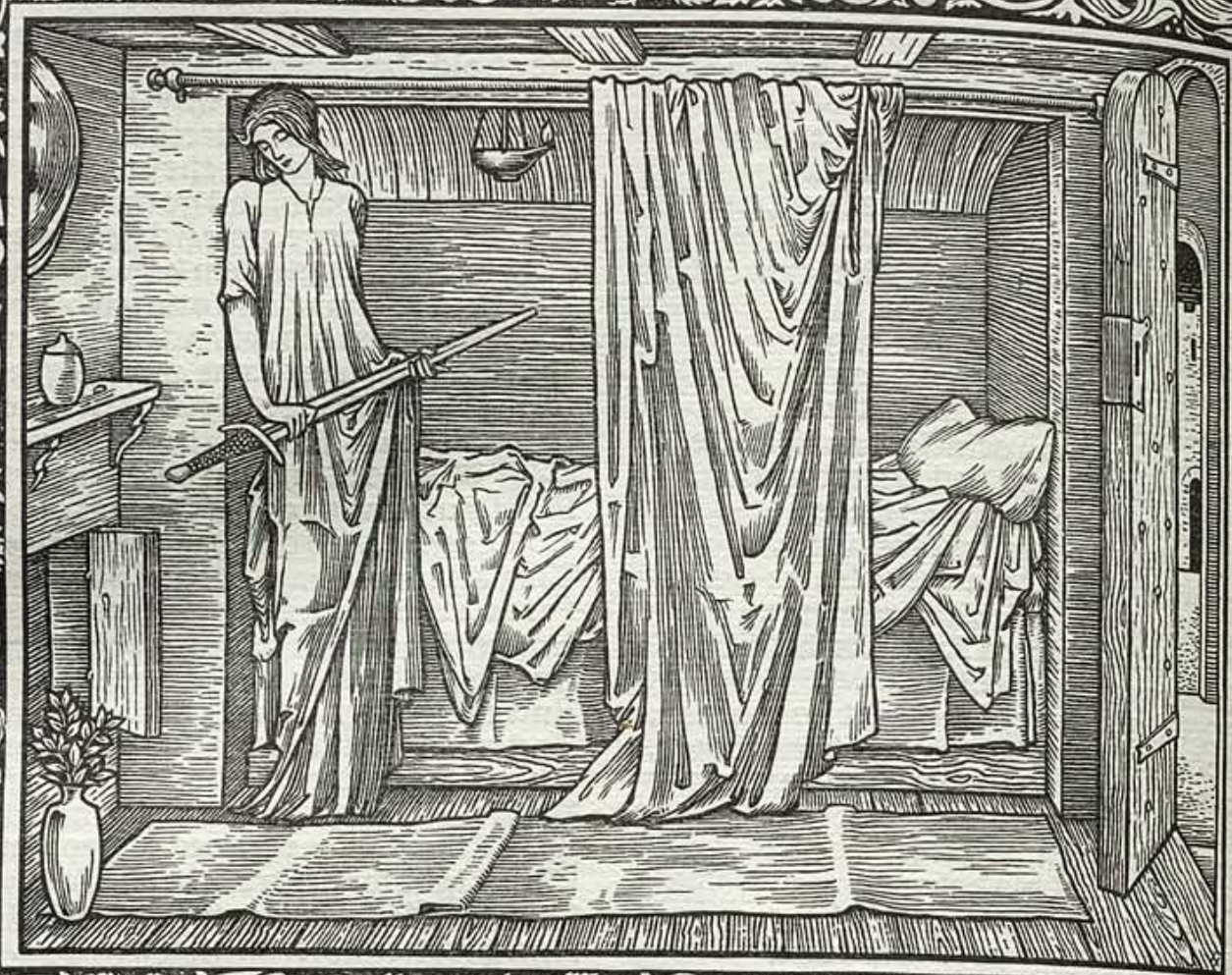
Save only she, ne mighte his lyf assure.
And shortly, to the point right for to go,
They been accorded ful, betwix hem two,
That Jasoun shal her wedde, as trewe knight;
And term yset, to come sone at night
Unto her chambre, and make ther his ooth,
Upon the goddes, that he, for leef ne looth,
Ne sholde her never falsen, night ne day,
To been her husbond, whyl he liven may,
As she that from his deeth him saved here.
And herupon, at night they mette yfere,
And doth his ooth, and goth with her to bedde.
And on the morwe, upward he him spedde;
for she hath taught him how he shal nat faile
The flees to winne, and stinten his batail;
And saved him his lyf and his honour;
And gat him greet name as a conquerour
Right through the sleight of her enchantement.

MEDEA hath Jasoun the flees, and hoom is went
With Medea, and tresor ful gret woon.
But unwist of her fader is she goon
To Tessaly, with duk Jasoun her leef,
That afterward hath broght her to mescheef,
for as a traitour he is from her go,
And with her laste his yonge children two,
And falsly hath betrayed her, alas!
And ever in love a cheef traitour he was;
And wedded yit the thridde wyf anon,
That was the doghter of the king Creon.

HIS is the meed of loving and guerdoun
That Medea received of Jasoun
Right for her trouthe and for her kindenesse,
That loved him better than herself, I gesse,
And laste her fader and her heritage.
And of Jasoun this is the vassalage,
That, in his dayes, nas ther noon yfounde
So fals a lover going on the grounde.
And therfor in her lettre thus she seyde
first, whan she of his falsnesse him umbreyde,
Why lyked me thy yelow heer to see
More then the boundes of myn honestee,
Why lyked me thy youthe and thy fairnesse,
And of thy tonge the infinit graciousnesse?
O, haddest thou in thy conquest deed ybe,
ful mikel untrouthe hath ther dyed with thee!
Wel can Ovyde her lettre in vers endyte,
Which were as now to long for me to wryte.

Explicit Legenda Ysiphile et Medee martirum.

INCIPIT LEGENDH LUCRECIE ROME MARTIRIS.



MOOT I SEYN THE EXILING OF
kinges
Of Rome, for hir horrible doinges,
And of the laste king Tarquinius,
As saith Ovyde and Titus Livius.
But for that cause telle I nat this storie,
But for to preise and drawen to memorie
The verray wyf, the verray trewe Lucesse,

That, for her wyfhood and her stedfast-
nesse,
Nat only that thise payens her comende,
But he, that cleped is in our legende
The grete Austyn, hath greet compassioun
Of this Lucesse, that starf at Rome toun;
And in what wyse, I wol but shortly trete,
And of this thing I touche but the grete.
WHAN Ardea beseged was aboute
With Romains, that ful sterne were
and stoute,
ful longe lay the sege, and litel wroghte,
So that they were half ydel, as hem thoghte;
And in his pley Tarquinius the yonge
Gan for to jape, for he was light of tonge,
And seyde, that It was an ydel tyf;
No man did ther no more than his wyf;
And lat us speke of wyves, that is best;
Praise every man his owne, as him lest,
And with our speche lat us ese our herte.
A KNIGHT, that highte Colatyn, up
sterne,
And seyde thus, Nay, for hit is no neede
To trowen on the word, but on the dede.
I have a wyf, quod he, that, as I trowe,
Is holden good of alle that ever her knowe;
Go we tonight to Rome, and we shul see.

TARQUINIUS answerde, That lyketh me.
To Rome be they come, & faste hem dighte
To Colatynes hous, and down they lighte,
Tarquinius, and eek this Colatyn.
The husbond knew the estres wel and fyne,
And prively into the hous they goon;
Nor at the gate porter was ther noon;
And at the chambre dore they abyde.
This noble wyf sat by her beddes syde
Dischevele, for no malice she ne thoghte;
And softe wolde our book seith that she wroghte
To kepen her fro slouthe and ydelnesse;
And bad her servants doon hir businesse,
And axeth hem: What tydings heren ye?
How seith men of the sege, how shal hit be?
God wolde the walles weren falle adoun;
Myn husbond is so longe out of this toun,
For which the dred doth me so sore smerte,
Right as a swerd hit stingeth to myn herte
Whan I think on the sege or of that place;
God save my lord, I preye him for his grace:
And therwithal ful tenderly she weep,
And of her werk she took no more keep,
But mekely she leet her eyen falle;
And thilke semblant sat her wel withalle.
And eek her teres, ful of honestee,
Embelissed her wyfly chastitee;
Her countenance is to her herte digne,
For they acordeden in dede and signe.
And with that word her husbond Colatyn,
Or she of him was war, com sterling in,
And seide, Dreed the noight, for I am here!
And she anon up roos, with blisful chere,
And kiste him, as of wyves is the wone.
TARQUINIUS, this proude kinges sone,
Conceived bath her beautee and her chere,
Her yelow heer, her shap, and her manere,
her hew, her wordes that she hath compleyned,
And by no crafte her beautee nas nat feyned;
And caughte to this lady swich desyr,
That in his herte brende as any fyr
So woodly, that his wit was al forgeten.
For wel, thoghte he, she sholde nat be geten;
And ay the more that he was in dispair,
The more he coveteth and thoghte her fair.
His blinde lust was al his covetinge.
MORWE, whan the brid began to singe,
Unto the sege he comth ful privily,
And by himself he walketh sobrelly,
Thimage of her recording alwey newe;
Thus lay her heer, and thus fresh was her hewe;
Thus sat, thus spak, thus span; this was her chere,
Thus fair she was, and this was her manere.
Al this conceit his herte hath now ytake.
And, as the see, with tempest al toshake,
That, after whan the storm is al ago,
Yet wol the water quappe a day or two,
Right so, thogh that her forme wer absent,
The plesaunce of her forme was present;
But natheles, nat plesaunce, but delyt,
Or an unrightful talent with despyt;
For, maugre her, she shal my lemman be;
hap helpeth hardy man alday, quod he;
What ende that I make, hit shal be so;

ff 2

And girt him with his swerde, and gan to go;
And forth he rit til he to Rome is come,
And al aloon his wey than bath he nome
Unto the house of Colatyn ful right.
Doun was the sonne, and day hath lost his light;
And in he com unto a privy halke,
And in the night ful theefly gan he stalke,
Whan every night was to his reste broght,
Ne no wight had of tresoun swich a thoght.
Were hit by window or by other gin,
With swerde ydrawe, shortly he comth in
Ther as she lay, this noble wyf Lucesse.
And, as she wook, her bed she felte presse.
What beste is that, quod she, that weyeth thus?
I am the kinges sone, Tarquinius,
Quod he, but and thou crye, or noise make,
Or if thou any creature awake,
By thilke God that formed man on lyve,
This swerd throughout thyn herte shal I ryve.
And therwithal unto her throte he sterte,
And sette the point al sharp upon her herte.
No word she spak, she hath no might therto.
What shal she sayn? her wit is al ago.
Right as a wolf that fynt a lomb aloon,
To whom shal she compleyne, or make moon?
What! shal she fighte with an hardy knight?
Wel wot men that a woman hath no might.
What! shal she crye, or how shal she asterte
That hath her by the throte, with swerde at herte?
She axeth grace, and seith al that she can.
Ne wolt thou nat, quod he, this cruel man,
As wisly Jupiter my soule save,
As I shal in the stable slee thy knave,
And leye him in thy bed, and loude crye,
That I thee finde in suche avouterie;
And thus thou shalt be deed, and also lese
Thy name, for thou shalt non other chese.
THISE Romain wyves loveden so hir name
At thilke tyme, and dredde so the shame,
That, what for fere of slaundre and drede
of deeth,
She loste bothe atones wit and breeth,
And in a swough she lay and wex so deed,
Men mighte smyten of her arm or heed;
She feleth nothing, neither foul ne fair.
TARQUINIUS, that art a kinges eyr,
And sholdest, as by linage and by right,
Doon as a lord and as a verray knight,
Why hastow doon dispyt to chivalrye?
Why hastow doon this lady vilanye?
Alas! of thee this was a vileins dede!
NOW to purpos; in the story I rede,
Whan he was goon, al this mischaunce is
falle.
This lady sente after her frendes alle,
fader, moder, husbond, al yfere;
And al dischevele, with her heres clere,
In habit swich as women used tho
Unto the burying of her frendes go,
She sit in halle with a sorweful sighte.
Her frendes axen what her aylen mighte,
And who was deed? And she sit ay wepinge,
A word for shame ne may she forth outbringe,
Ne upon hem she dorste nat beholde.

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But atte laste of Tarquiny she hem tolde,
This reful cas, and al this thing horrible.
The wo to tellen hit were impossible,
That she and alle her frendes made atones.
Al hadde folkes hertes been of stones,
Hit mighte have makid hem upon her rewe,
Her herte was so wyfly and so trewe.
She seide, that, for her gilt ne for her blame,
Her husbond sholde nat have the foule name,
That wolde she nat suffre, by no wey.
And they answerden alle, upon hir fey,
That they foryeve hit her, for hit was right;
Hit was no gilt, hit lay nat in her might;
And seiden her ensamples many oon.
But al for noght; for thus she seide anon:
Be as be may, quod she, of forgyving,
I wol nat have no forgyft for nothing.
But prively she caughte forth a knyf,
And therwithal she rafte herself her lyf;
And as she fel adoun, she caste her look,
And of her clothes yit she hede took;
For in her falling yit she hadde care
Lest that her feet or swiche thing lay bare;
So wel she loved clenness and eek trouthe.
Of her had al the toun of Rome routhe,

And Brutus by her chaste blode hath swore
That Tarquin sholde ybanisht be therfore,
And al his kin; and let the peple calle,
And openly the tale he tolde hem alle,
And openly let carie her on a bere
Through al the toun, that men may see & here
The horrible deed of her oppressioun.
Ne never was ther king in Rome toun
Sin thilke day; and she was holden there
A seint, and ever her day yhalwed dere
As in hir lawe; and thus endeth Lucresse,
The noble wyf, as Titus bereth witness.
TELL hit, for she was of love so trewe,
Ne in her wille she chaunged for nonewe,
And for the stable herte, sad and kinde,
That in these women men may alday finde:
Ther as they caste hir herte, ther hit dwelleth,
for wel I wot, that Crist himselfe telleth,
That in Israel, as wyd as is the lond,
That so gret feith in al the lond he ne fond
As in a woman; and this is no lye.
And as of men, lokeþ which tyrannye
They doon alday; assay hem who so liste,
The trewest is ful brotel for to triste.
Explicit Legenda Lucrecie Rome martiris.

INCIPIT LEGENDA ADRIANE DE ATHENES

LUGE INFERNAL, MINOS,
OF CRETE KING,
NOW COMETH THY LOT,
NOW COMESTOW ON THE
RING;
NAT FOR THY SAKE ONLY
WRYTE I THIS STORIE,
BUT FOR TO CLEPE A-
GEIN UNTO MEMORIE
OF THESEUS THE GRETE
UNTROUTHE OF LOVE;
FOR WHICH THE GODDES
OF THE HEVEN ABOVE
BEN WROTHE, AND
WRECHE HAN TAKE FOR
THY SINNE.
BE REED FOR SHAME!
NOW I THY LYF BE-
GINNE.

MINOS, that was the mighty king of
Crete,
That hadde an hundred citees
stronge and grete,
To scole hath sent his sone Androgeus,
To Athenes; of the whiche hit happed thus,
That he was slayn, lerning philosophye,
Right in that citee, nat but for envye.

THE grete Minos, of the whiche I speke,
His sones deeth is comen for to wreke;
Alcathoe he bisegeth harde and longe.
But natheles the walles be so stronge,
And Nisus, that was king of that citee,
So chivalrous, that litel dredeth he;
Of Minos or his ost took he no cure,

Til on a day befel an aventure,
That Nisus doghter stood upon the wal,
And of the sege saw the maner al.
So happed hit, that, at a scarmishing,
She caste her herte upon Minos the king,
for his beautee and for his chivalrye,
So sore, that she wende for to dye.
And, shortly of this proces for to pace,
She made Minos winnen thilke place,
So that the citee was al at his wille,
To saven whom him list, or elles spille;
But wikkedly he quitte her kindenesse,
And let her drenche in sorowe and distresse
Nere that the goddes hadde of her pite;
But that tale were to long as now for me.

ATTHENES wan this king Minos also,
And Alcathoe and other tounes mo;
And this the effect, that Minos hath so
driven
hem of Athenes, that they mote him yiven
fro yere to yere her owne children dere
for to be slayn, as ye shul after here.

THIS Minos hath a monstre, a wikked
beste,
That was so cruel that, without areste,
Whan that a man was broght in his presence,
He wolde him ete, ther helpeth no defence.
And every thridde yeer, withouten doute,
They casten lot, and, as hit com aboute
On riche, on pore, he moste his sone take,
And of his child he moste present make
Unto Minos, to save him or to spille,
Or lete his beste devoure him at his wille.
And this hath Minos don, right in despyt;
To wreke his sone was set al his delyt,



And maken hem of Athenes his thral
fro yere to yere, whyl that he liven shal;
And hoom he saileth whan this toun is wonne.
This wikked custom is so longe yronne
Til that of Athenes king Egeus
Mot sende his owne sone, Theseus,
Sith that the lot is fallen him upon,
To be devoured, for grace is ther non.
And forth is lad this woful yonge knight
Unto the court of king Minos ful right,
And in a prison, fettered, cast is he
Til thilke tyme he sholde yfreten be.

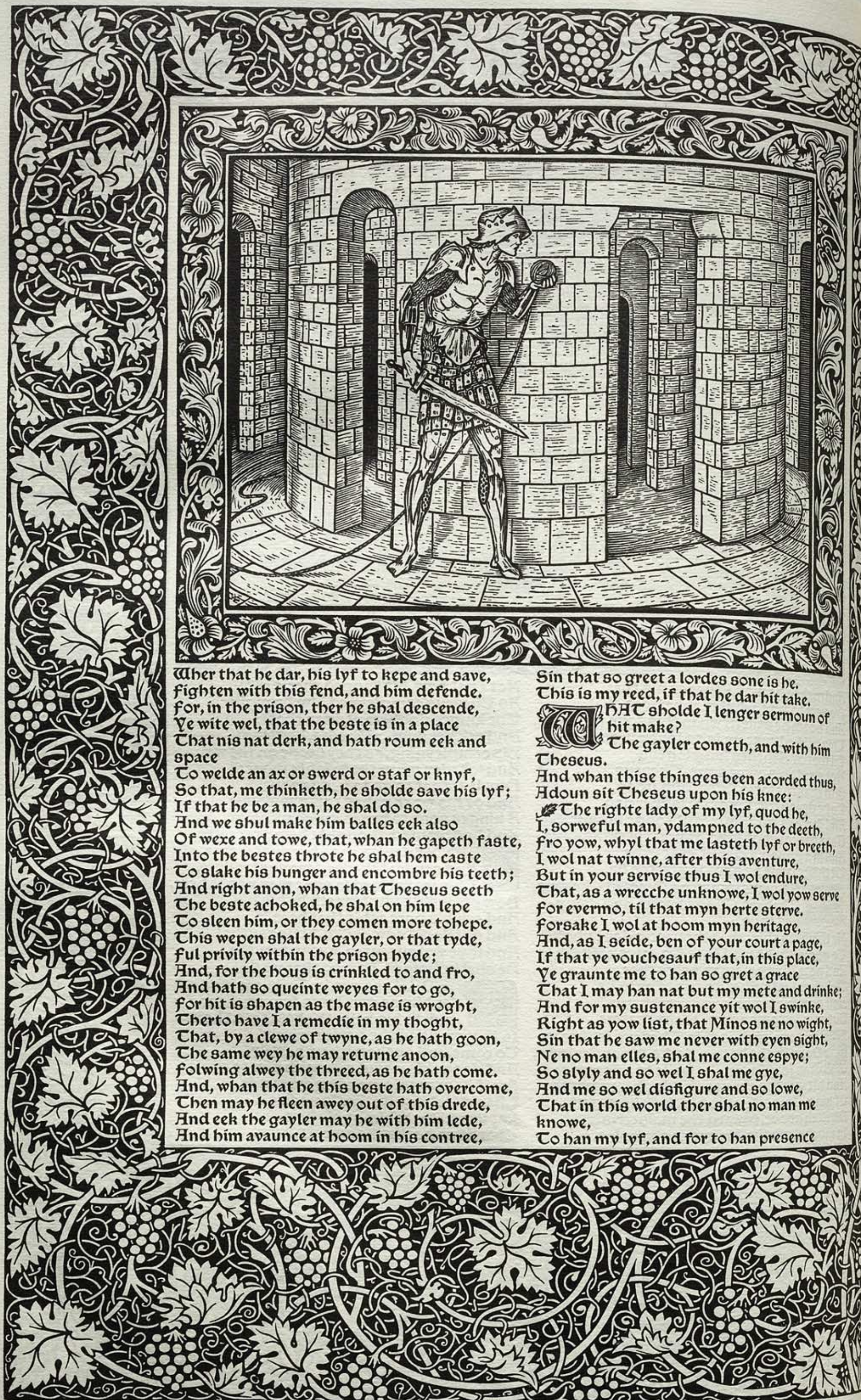
TEL maystow wepe, O woful Theseus,
That art a kinges sone, and damp-
ned thus.
Me thinketh this, that thou were depe yholde
To whom that saved thee fro cares colde!
And now, if any woman helpe thee,
Wel oughtestow her servant for to be,
And been hir trewe lover yeer by yeer!
But now to come ageyn to my matere.

THE tour, ther as this Theseus is throwe
Doun in the botom derke & wonder lowe,
Was joyning in the walle to a foreyne;
And hit was longing to the doghtren tweyne
Of king Minos, that in hir chambres grete
Dwelten above, toward the maister/strete,
In moche mirthe, in joye and in solas.

Not I nat how, hit happed ther, per cas,
As Theseus compleyned him by nighte,
The kinges doghter, Adrian that highte,
And eek her suster Phedra, herden al
his compleyning, as they stode on the wal
And lokeden upon the bryghte mone;
hem leste nat to go to bedde sone.
And of his wo they had compassioun;
A kinges sone to ben in swich prisoun
And be devoured, thoughte hem gret pitee.

ADRIAN spak to her suster free,
And seyde: Phedra, leve suster dere,
This woful lordes sone may ye nat here,
How pitously compleyneth he his kin,
And eek his pore estat that he is in,
And gylteles? now certes, hit is routhe!
And if ye wol assenten, by my trouthe,
He shal be holpen, how so that we do!

PHEDRA answerde: Ywis, me is as wo
for him as ever I was for any man;
And, to his help, the beste reed I can
Is that we doon the gayler prively
To come, and speke with us hastily,
And doon this woful man with him to come,
for if he may this monstre overcome,
Than were he quit; ther is noon other bote.
Lat us wel taste him at his herterote,
That, if so be that he a wepen have,



Wher that he dar, his lyf to kepe and save,
fighten with this fend, and him defende.
for, in the prison, ther he shal descende,
Ye wite wel, that the beste is in a place
That nis nat derk, and hath roum eek and
space
To welde an ax or sward or staf or knyf,
So that, me thinketh, he sholde save his lyf;
If that he be a man, he shal do so.
And we shul make him balles eek also
Of wexe and towe, that, whan he gapeth faste,
Into the bestes throte he shal hem caste
To slake his hunger and encombre his teeth;
And right anon, whan that Theseus seeth
The beste achoked, he shal on him lepe
To sleen him, or they comen more tohepe.
This wepen shal the gayler, or that tyde,
ful privily within the prison hyde;
And, for the hous is crinkled to and fro,
And hath so queinte weyes for to go,
for hit is shapen as the mase is wroght,
Therto have I a remedie in my thoght,
That, by a clewe of twyne, as he hath goon,
The same wey he may returne anon,
folwing alwey the threed, as he hath come.
And, whan that he this beste hath overcome,
Then may he fleen away out of this drede,
And eek the gayler may be with him lede,
And him avaunce at boom in his contree,

Sin that so greet a lordes sone is he.
This is my reed, if that he dar hit take.
WHAT sholde I lenger sermoun of
hit make?
The gayler cometh, and with him
Theseus.
And whan these thinges been acorded thus,
Adoun sit Theseus upon his knee:
The right lady of my lyf, quod he,
I, sorweful man, ydampned to the deeth,
fro yow, whyl that me lasteth lyf or breeth,
I wol nat twinne, after this aventure,
But in your servise thus I wol endure,
That, as a wrecche unknowe, I wol yow serve
for evermo, til that myn herte sterve.
forsake I wol at boom myn heritage,
And, as I seide, ben of your court a page,
If that ye vouchesauf that, in this place,
Ye graunte me to han so gret a grace
That I may han nat but my mete and drinke;
And for my sustenance yit wol I swinke,
Right as yow list, that Minos ne no wight,
Sin that he saw me never with eyen sight,
Ne no man elles, shal me conne espye;
So stily and so wel I shal me gye,
And me so wel disfigure and so lowe,
That in this world ther shal no man me
knowe,
To han my lyf, and for to han presence

Of yow, that doon to me this excellence.
And to my fader shal I senden here
This worthy man, that is now your gaylere,
And him to guerdon, that he shal wel be
Don of the grettest men of my contree.
And yif I dorste seyn, my lady bright,
I am a kinges sone, and eek a knight;
As wolde God, yif that hit mighte be
Ye weren in my contree, alle three,
And I with yow, to bere yow companye,
Chan shulde ye seen yif that I therof lye!
And, if I profre yow in low manere
To ben your page and serven yow right here,
But I yow serve as lowly in that place,
I prey to Mars to yive me swiche a grace
That shames deeth on me ther mote falle,
And deeth and povert to my frendes alle;
And that my spirit by nighte mote go
After my deeth, and walke to and fro;
That I mote of a traitour have a name,
for which my spirit go, to do me shame!
And yif I ever claime other degree,
But if ye vouchesauf to yive hit me,
As I have seid, of shames deeth I deye!
And mercy, lady! I can nat elles seye!
SEEMLY knight was Theseus to see,
And yong, but of a twenty yeer and three;
But whoso hadde yseyn his countenance,
He wolde have wept, for routhe of his penaunce;
for which this Adriane in this manere
Answerde to his profre and to his chere.
A kinges sone, and eek a knight, quod she,
To been my servant in so low degree,
God shilde hit, for the shame of women alle!
And leve me never swich a cas befall!
But sende yow grace and sleight of herte also,
Yow to defende and knightly gleen your fo,
And leve hereafter that I may yow finde
To me and to my suster here so kinde,
That I repente nat to give yow lyf!
Yit were hit better that I were your wyf,
Sin that ye been as gentil born as I,
And have a reame, nat but faste by,
Then that I suffred giltles to sterve,
Or that I let yow as a page serve;
Hit is not profit, as unto your kinrede;
But what is that that man nil do for drede?
And to my suster, sin that hit is so
That she mot goon with me, if that I go,
Or elles suffre deeth as wel as I,
That ye unto your sone as trewely
Doon her be wedded at your boom/coming.
This is the fynal ende of al this thing;
Ye swere hit heer, on al that may be sworn.
E, lady myn, quod he, or elles torn
Mote I be with the Minotaur to-morwe!
And haveth herof my herte/blood to borwe,
Yif that ye wile; if I had knyf or spere,
I wolde hit leten out, and theron swere,
For than at erst I wot ye wil me leve.
By Mars, that is the cheef of my bileve,
So that I mighte liven and nat faile
To-morwe for tacheve my bataile,
Inolde never fro this place flee,
Til that ye shuld the verray preve see.

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for now, if that the sooth I shal yow say,
I have yloved yow ful many a day,
Thogh ye ne wiste hit nat, in my contree.
And aldermost desyred yow to see
Of any erthly living creature;
Upon my trouthe I swere, and yow assure,
Thise seven yeer I have your servant be;
Now have I yow, and also have ye me,
My dere herte, of Athenes duchesse!
THIS lady smyleth at his stedfastnesse,
And at his hertly wordes, and his chere,
And to her suster seide in this manere,
Al softly: Now, suster myn, quod she,
Now be we duchesses, bothe I and ye,
And sikered to the regals of Athenes,
And bothe hereafter lykly to be quenes,
And saved fro his deeth a kinges sone,
As ever of gentil women is the wone
To save a gentil man, emforth hir might,
In honest cause, and namely in his right.
Me thinketh no wight oghte herof us blame,
Ne beren us therfor an evel name.
AND shortly of this matere for to make,
This Theseus of her hath leve ytake,
And every point performed was in dede
As ye have in this covenant herd me rede.
His wepen, his clew, his thing that I have said,
Was by the gayler in the hous ylaide
Ther as this Minotaur hath his dwelling,
Right faste by the dore, at his entring.
And Theseus is lad unto his deeth,
And forth unto this Minotaur he geeth,
And by the teching of this Adriane
He overcom this beste, and was his bane;
And out he cometh by the clewe again
ful prevely, whan he this beste hath slain;
And by the gayler geten hath a barge,
And of his wyves tresor gan hit charge,
And took his wyf, and eek her suster free,
And eek the gayler, and with hem alle three
Is stole away out of the lond by nighte,
And to the contree of Ennopye him dighte
Ther as he had a frend of his knowinge.
Ther festen they, ther dauncen they and singe;
And in his armes hath this Adriane,
That of the beste hath kept him from his bane;
And gat him ther a newe barge anon,
And of his contree/folk a ful gret woon,
And taketh his leve, and boomward saileth he.
And in an yle, amid the wilde see,
Ther as ther dwelte creature noon
Save wilde bestes, and that ful many oon,
He made his ship alonde for to sette;
And in that yle half a day he lette,
And seide, that on the lond he moste him reste.
His mariners han doon right as him leste;
And, for to tellen shortly in this cas,
Whan Adriane his wyf aslepe was,
for that her suster fairer was than she,
He taketh her in his hond, and forth goth he
To shippe, and as a traitour stal his way
Whyl that this Adriane aslepe lay,
And to his contree/ward he saileth blyve,
A twenty devil way the wind him dryve!
And fond his fader drenched in the see.

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WE list no more to speke of him, parde;
Thise false lovers, poison be hir bane!
But I wol turne again to Adriane
That is with slepe for werimesse atake.
ful sorwefully her herte may awake.
Allas! for thee my herte hath now pite!
Right in the dawening awaketh she,
And gropeth in the bedde, and fond right
noght.

Alas! quod she, that ever I was wrought!
I am betrayed! and her heer torente,
And to the stronde barfot faste she wente,
And cryed: Thesus! myn herte swete!
Wher be ye, that I may nat with yow mete,
And mighte thus with bestes been yslain?

WHE holwe rokkes answerde her again;
No man she saw, and yit shynd the
mone,
And hye upon a rokke she wente sone,
And saw his barge sailing in the see.
Cold wex her herte, and right thus seide she:
Meker than ye finde I the bestes wilde!

Hadde he nat sinne, that her thus begylde?
She cryed: O turne again, for routh and
sinne!
Thy barge hath nat al his meiny inne!
Her kerchef on a pole up stikked she,
Hsaunce that he sholde hit wel ysee,

And him remembre that she was behinde,
And turne again, and on the stronde her finde;
But al for noght; his wey he is ygoon.
And doun she fil aswown upon a stoon;
And up she rist, and histe, in al her care,
The steppes of his feet, ther he hath fare,
And to her bedde right thus she spekethe tho:
Thou bed, quod she, that hast receyved two,
Thou shalt answerde of two, and nat of oon!
Wher is thy gretter part away ygoon?
Allas! wher shal I, wrecched wight, become!
for, thogh so be that ship or boot heer come,
hoom to my contree dar I nat for drede;
I can myselven in this cas nat rede!

WHAT shal I telle more her com-
pleining?
Hit is so long, hit were an hevvy
thing.

In her epistle Nasso telleth al;
But shortly to the ende I telle shal.
The goddes have her holpen, for pitee;
And, in the signe of Taurus, men may see
The stones of her coroun shyne clere.

WOL no more speke of this matere;
But thus this false lover can begyle
his trewe love. The devil quyte him his
whyle!

Explicit Legenda Adriane de Athenes.



INCIPIT LEGENDA PHILOMENE.

Deus dator formarum.



PLIVER OF THE FORMES, THAT HAST
wrought

The faire world, and bare hit in thy thought
Eternally, or thou thy werk began,
Why madest thou, unto the slaundre of man,
Or, al be that hit was not thy doing,

As for that fyn to make swiche a thing,
Why suffrest thou that Cereus was bore,
That is in love so fals and so forswore,
That, fro this world up to the firste hevne,
Corrupteth, whan that folk his name nevene?
And, as to me, so grisly was his dede,
That, whan that I his foule story rede,
Myn eyen wexen foule and sore also;
Yit last the venim of so longe ago,
That hit enfecteth him that wol beholde
The story of Cereus, of which I tolde.

WHICH Trace was he lord, and kin to Marte,
The cruel god that stant with bloody
darte;

And wedded had he, with a blisful chere,
King Pandiones faire doghter dere,
That highte Progne, flour of her contree,
Thogh Juno list nat at the feste be,
Ne Ymeneus, that god of wedding is;
But at the feste redy been, ywis,
The furies three, with alle hir mortel brond.
The owle al night aboute the balkes wond,
That prophet is of wo and of mischaunce.
This revel, ful of songe and ful of daunce,
Lasteth a fourtenight, or litel lasse,
But, shortly of this story for to passe,

for I am wery of him for to telle,
five year his wyf and he togeder dwelle,
Til on a day she gan so sore longe
To seen her suster, that she saw nat longe,
That for desyr she niste what to seye.
But to her husband gan she for to preye,
for Goddes love, that she moste ones goon
Her suster for to seen, and come anoon,
Or elles, but she moste to her wende,
She preide him, that he wolde after her sende;
And this was, day by day, al her prayere
With al humblesse of wyfhood, word, and chere.

THIS Cereus let make his shippes yare,
And into Grece himself is forth yfare
Unto his fader in lawe, and gan him preye
To vouchesauf that, for a month or tweye,
That Philomene, his wyves suster, mighte
On Progne his wyf but ones have a sighte,
And she shal come to yow again anoon.
Myself with her wol bothe come and goon,
And as myn hertes lyf I wol her kepe.

THIS olde Pandion, this king, gan wepe
for tendernesse of herte, for to leve
His doghter goon, and for to yive her leve;
Of al this world he lovede nothing so;
But at the laste leve hath she to go,
for Philomene, with salte teres eke,
Gan of her fader grace to beseke
To seen her suster, that her longeth so;
And him embraceth with her armes two.
And therewithal so yong and fair was she
That, whan that Cereus saw her beautee,
And of array that ther was noon her liche,
And yit of bountee was she two so riche,
He caste his fyry herte upon her so
That he wol have her, how so that hit go,
And with his wyles kneled and so preide,
Til at the laste Pandion thus seyde:

NOW, sone, quod he, that art to me so dere,
I thee betake my yonge doghter here,
That bereth the key of al my hertes lyf.
And grete wel my doghter and thy wyf,
And yive her leve somtyme for to pleye,
That she may seen me ones er I deye.

And soothly, he hath mad him riche feste,
And to his folk, the moste and eek the leste,
That with him com; and yaf him yiftes grete,
And him conveyeth through the maister strete
Of Athenes, and to the see him broghte,
And turneth boom; no malice he ne thoughte.

THIS oves pulleth forth the vessel faste,
And into Trace arriveth at the laste,
And up into a forest he her ledde,
And to a cave privily him spedde;
And, in this derke cave, yif her leste,
Or leste noght, he bad her for to reste;
Of whiche her herte agroos, and seyde thus:
Wher is my suster, brother Cereus?

And therewithal she wepte tenderly,
And quook for fere, pale and pitously,
Right as the lamb that of the wolf is biten;
Or as the colver, that of the egle is smiten,
And is out of his clawes forth escaped,

Yet hit is sore afered and awhaped
Lest hit be hent eftsones, so sat she.
But utterly hit may non other be,
By force hath he, this traitour, doon that dede,
That he hath reft her of her maydenhede,
Maugree her heed, by strengthe and by his might,
Lo! here a dede of men, and that a right!
She cryeth Suster! with ful loude stevene,
And fader dere! and Help me, God in hevne!

Al helpeth nat; and yet this false theef
Hath doon this lady yet a more mischeef,
for fere lest she sholde his shame crye,
And doon him openly a vilanye,
And with his sward her tong of kerveth he,
And in a castel made her for to be
ful privily in prison evermore,
And kepte her to his usage and his store,
So that she mighte him nevermore asterte.

O sely Philomene! wo is thyn herte;
God wreke thee, and sende thee thy bone!
Now is hit tyme I make an ende sone.

THIS Cereus is to his wyf ycome,
And in his armes hath his wyf ynome,
And pitously he weep, and shook his heed,
And swor her that he fond her suster dede;
for which this sely Progne hath swich wo,
That ny her sorweful herte brak atwo;
And thus in teres lete I Progne dwelle,
And of her suster forth I wol yow telle.

THIS woful lady lerned had in youthe
So that she werken & embrouden couthe,
And weven in her stole the radrewe
As hit of women hath be woned yore.

And, shortly for to seyn, she hath her fille
Of mete and drink, and clothing at her wille,
And coude eek rede, and wel ynogh endyte,
But with a penne coude she nat wryte;
But lettres can she weven to and fro,
So that, by that the yeer was al ago,
She had ywoven in a stamin large
How she was broght from Athenes in a barge,
And in a cave how that she was broght;
And al the thing that Cereus hath wroght,
She waf hit wel, and wroot the story above,
How she was served for her suster love;
And to a knave a ring she yaf anoon,
And prayed him, by signes, for to goon
Unto the quene, and beren her that clooth,
And than by signes swor him many an ooth,
She sholde him yewe what she geten mighte.

THIS knave anoon unto the quene him
dighte,
And took hit her, and al the maner tolde,
And, whan that Progne hath this thing beholde,
No word she spak, for sorwe and eek for rage;
But feyned her to goon on pilgrimage
To Bachus temple; and, in a lifel stounde,
Her dombe suster sitting hath she founde,
Weeping in the castel her aloon.
Allas! the wo, the compleint, and the moon
That Progne upon her dombe suster maketh!
In armes everich of hem other taketh,
And thus I lete hem in hir sorwe dwelle.

THE remenant is no charge for to telle,
for this is al & som, thus was she served,
That never harm agilte ne deserved
Unto this cruel man, that she of wiste.
Ye may be war of men, yif that yow liste,
for, al be that he wol nat, for his shame,

Doon so as Cereus, to lese his name,
Ne serve yow as a mordroun or a knave,
ful litel whyle shul ye trewe him have,
That wol I seyn, al were he now my brother,
But hit so be that he may have non other.
Explicit Legenda Philomene.

INCIPIT LEGENDA PHILLIS.



That wikked fruit cometh of a wikked tree,
That may ye finde, if that it lyketh yow.
But for this ende I speke this as now,
To telle you of false Demophon.
In love a falser herde I never non,
But if hit were his fader Theseus.
God, for his grace, fro swich oon kepe us!
Thus may thise women prayen that hit here.
Now to the effect turne I of my matere.

DESTROYED is of Troye the citee;
This Demophon com sailing in the see
Toward Athenes, to his paleys large;
With him com many a ship and many a barge
ful of his folk, of which ful many oon
Is wounded sore, and seek, and wo begoon.
And they han at the sege longe ylain.
Behinde him com a wind and eek a rain
That shoof so sore, his sail ne mighte stonde,
him were lever than al the world alonde,

PREVE AS MEL AS BY HUCTORITEE.

So hunteth him the tempest to and fro.
So derk hit was, he coude nowher go;
And with a wave brosten was his stene.
His ship was rent so lowe, in swich manere,
That carpenter ne coude hit nat amende.
The see, by nighte, as any torche brende
for wood, and posseth him now up now down,
Til Neptune hath of him compassioun.
And Chetis, Chorus, Triton, and they alle,
And maden him upon a lond to falle,
Wherof that Phillis lady was and quene,
Liguris doghter, fairer on to sene
Than is the flour again the brighte sonne.
Annethe is Demophon to londe ywonne,
Mayk and eek wery, and his folk forpynd
Of werinesse, and also enfamyned;
And to the deeth he almost was ydriven.
His wyse folk to conseil han him yiven
To seken help and socour of the queen,
And loken what his grace mighte been,
And maken in that lond som chevisaunce,
To kepen him fro wo and fro mischaunce.
for seek was he, and almost at the deeth;
Annethe mighte he speke or drawe his breeth,
And lyth in Rodopeya him for to reste.
Whan he may walke, him thoughte hit was the beste
Unto the court to seken for socour.
Men knewe him wel, and diden him honour;
for at Athenes duk and lord was he,
As Theseus his fader hadde ybe,
That in his tyme was of greet renoun,
No man so greet in al his regoun;
And lyk his fader of face and of stature,
And fals of love; hit com him of nature;
As doth the fox Renard, the foxes sone,
Of kinde he coude his olde faders wone
Withoute lore, as can a drake swimme,
Whan hit is caught and caried to the brimme.
This honourable Phillis doth him chere,
Her lyketh wel his port and his manere.
But for I am agroted heer biforn
To wryte of hem that been in love forsworn,
And eek to haste me in my legende,
Which to performe God me grace sende,
Therfor I passe shortly in this wyse;
Ye han wel herd of Theseus devyse
In the betraising of fair Adriane,
That of her pite kepte him from his bane.
At shorte wordes, right so Demophon
The same wey, the same path hath gon
That dide his false fader Theseus,
for unto Phillis hath he sworn thus,
To wedden her, and her his trouthe plighte,
And piked of her al the good he mighte,
Whan he was hool and sound and hadde his reste;
And doth with Phillis what so that him leste.
And wel coude I, yif that me leste so,
Tellen al his doing to and fro.

NE seide, unto his contree moste he saile,
for ther he wolde her wedding appaile
As fil to her honour and his also.

And openly he took his leve tho,
And hath her sworn, he wolde nat sojorne,
But in a month he wolde again retorne.
And in that lond let make his ordinaunce
As verray lord, and took the obeisaunce
Wel and hoomly, and let his shippes dighte,
And hoom he goth the nexte wey he mighte;
for unto Phillis yit ne com he noght.
And that bath she so harde and sore aboght,
Alas! that, as the stories us recorde,
She was her owne deeth right with a corde,
Whan that she saw that Demophon her trayed.
AT to him first she wroot and faste him

Prayed
He wolde come, and her deliver of peyne
As I rehearse shal a word or twayne.
Me list nat vouchesauf on him to swinke,
Ne spende on him a penne ful of inke,
for fals in love was he, right as his syre;
The devil sette hir soules bothe afyre!
But of the lettre of Phillis wol I wryte
A word or twayne, although hit be but lyte.

THYN hostesse, quod she, O Demophon,
Thy Phillis, which that is so wo begon,
Of Rodopeye, upon yow moot compleyne.
Over the terme set betwix us twayne,
That ye ne holden forward, as ye seyde;
Your anker, which ye in our haven leyde,
Dighte us, that ye wolde comen, out of doute,
Or that the mone ones wente aboute.
But tymes foure the mone hath hid her face
Sin thilke day ye wente fro this place,
And four tymes light the world again.
But for al that, yif I shal soothly sain,
Yit hath the stream of Sitho nat ybrought
from Athenes the ship; yit comth hit noght.
And, yif that ye the terme rekne wolde,
As I or other trewe lovers sholde,
I pleyne not, God wot, beform my day.

BUT al her lettre wryten I ne may
By ordre, for hit were to me a charge;
Her lettre was right long and therto large;
But here and there in ryme I have hit laid,
Ther as me thoughte that she wel hath said.

SHE seide: Thy sailes comen nat again,
Ne to thy word ther nis no fey certein;
But I wot why ye come nat, quod she;
for I was of my love to you so free.
And of the goddes that ye han forswore,
Yif that hir vengeance falle on yow therfore,
Ye be nat suffisaunt to bere the peyne.
To moche trusted I, wel may I pleyne,
Upon your linage and your faire tonge,
And on your teres falsly out ywonge.
How coude ye wepe so by craft? quod she;
May ther swiche teres feyned be?
Now certes, yif ye wolde have in memorie,
Hit oghte be to yow but litel glorie
To have a sely mayde thus betrayed!
To God, quod she, preye I, and ofte have prayed,
That hit be now the grettest prys of alle,
And moste honour that ever yow shal befall!
And whan thyn olde auncestres peynted be,

In which men may hir worthinesse see,
Than, preye I God, thou peynted be also,
That folk may reden, forby as they go,
Lo! this is he, that with his flaterie
Betrayed hath and doon her vilanye
That was his trewe love in thoghte and dede!
But sothly, of oo point yit may they rede,
That ye ben lyk your fader as in this;
for he begyled Adriane, ywis,
With swiche an art and swiche sotelte
As thou thyselfen hast begyled me.
As in that point, although hit be nat fayr,
Thou folwest him, certein, and art his eyr.

But sin thus sinfully ye me begyle,
By body mote ye seen, within a whyle,
Right in the haven of Athenes fleting,
Withoute sepulture and buryinge;
Thogh ye ben harder than is any stoon.
And, whan this lettre was forth sent anon
And knew how brotel and how fals he was,
She for dispeyr fordidde herself, alas!
Swich sorwe hath she, for she besette her so.
Be war, ye women, of your sotil fo,
Sin yit this day men may ensample see;
And trusteth, as in love, no man but me.
Explicit Legenda Phillis.

INCIPIT LEGENDA YPERMISTRE.

IN which men may hir worthinesse see,
Than, preye I God, thou peynted be also,
That folk may reden, forby as they go,
Lo! this is he, that with his flaterie
Betrayed hath and doon her vilanye
That was his trewe love in thoghte and dede!
But sothly, of oo point yit may they rede,
That ye ben lyk your fader as in this;
for he begyled Adriane, ywis,
With swiche an art and swiche sotelte
As thou thyselfen hast begyled me.
As in that point, although hit be nat fayr,
Thou folwest him, certein, and art his eyr.

GRACE WHYLOM WEREN brethren two,
Of whiche that oon was called Danao,
That many a sone hath of his body wonne,
As swiche false lovers ofte conne.
Among his sones alle ther was oon
That aldermost he lovede of everichoon.
And whan this child was born, this Danao
Shoop him a name, and called him Lino.
That other brother called was Egiste,
That was of love as fals as ever him liste,
And many a doghter gat he in his lyve;
Of which he gat upon his righte wyve
A doghter dere, and dide her for to calle
Ypermistra, yongest of hem alle;
The whiche child, of her nativitee,
To alle gode thewes born was she,
As lyked to the goddes, or she was born,
That of the shefe she sholde be the corn;
The Mirides, that we clepen Destinee,
hath shapen her that she mot nedes be
Pitouse, sadde, wyse, and trewe as steel;
And to this woman hit accordeth weel.
for, though that Venus yaf her greet beautee,
With Jupiter compounded so was she
That conscience, trouthe, and drede of shame,
And of her wyfhood for to kepe her name,
This, thoughte her, was felicitie as here.

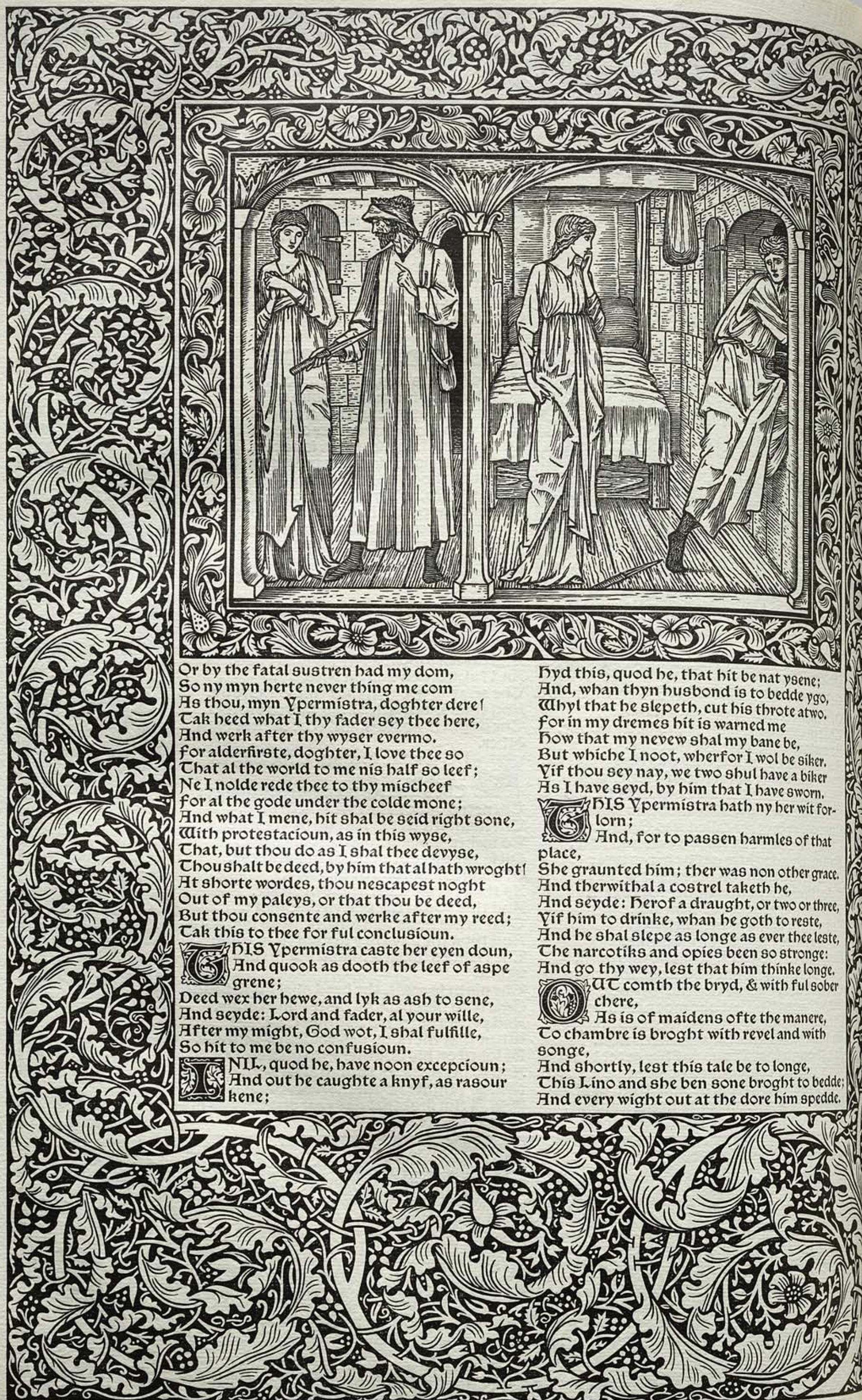
And rede Mars was, that tyme of the yere,
So feble, that his malice is him raft,
Repressed hath Venus his cruel craft;
What with Venus and other oppressioun
Of houses, Mars his venim is adoun,
That Ypermistra dar nat handle a knyf
In malice, thogh she sholde lese her lyf.
But natheles, as heven gan tho turne,
To badde aspectes hath she of Saturne,
That made her for to deyen in prisoun,
As I shal after make mencoun.

O Danao and Egistes also,
Although so be that they were brethren
two,
for thilke tyme nas spared no linage,
hit lyked hem to maken mariage
Betwix Ypermistra and him Lino,
And casten swiche a day hit shal be so;
And ful accorded was hit witterly;
The array is wrought, the tyme is faste by.
And thus Lino hath of his fadres brother
The doghter wedded, and eche of hem hath
other.

THE torches brennen & the lampes
brighte,
The sacrifices been ful redy dighte;
Thencens out of the fyre reketh sote,
The flour, the leef is rent up by the rote
To maken garlands and corounes hye;
ful is the place of soun of minstrelcy,
Of songes amorous of mariage,
As thilke tyme was the pleyne usage.
And this was in the paleys of Egiste,
That in his hous was lord, right as him liste;
And thus the day they dryven to an ende;
The frendes taken leve, and hoom they
wende.

The night is come, the bryd shal go to bedde;
Egiste to his chambre faste him spedde,
And privily he let his doghter calle.
Whan that the hous was voided of hem alle,
He loked on his doghter with glad chere,
And to her spak, as ye shul after here.

Righte doghter, tresor of myn herte!
Sin first that day that shapen was my
sherte,



Or by the fatal sustren had my dom,
So ny myn herte never thing me com
As thou, myn Ypermistra, doghter dere!
Tak heed what I thy fader sey thee here,
And werk after thy wyser evermo.
for alderfirste, doghter, I love thee so
That al the world to me nis half so leef;
Ne I nolde rede thee to thy mischeef
for al the gode under the colde mone;
And what I mene, hit shal be seid right sone,
With protestacioun, as in this wyse,
That, but thou do as I shal thee devyse,
Thoushalt be deed, by him that al hath wrought!
At shorte wordes, thou nescapest noight
Out of my paleys, or that thou be deed,
But thou consente and werke after my reed;
Tak this to thee for ful conclusioun.

THIS Ypermistra caste her eyen down,
And quook as dooth the leef of aspe
grene;

Deed wex her hewe, and lyk as ash to sene,
And seyde: Lord and fader, al your wille,
After my might, God wot, I shal fulfille,
So hit to me be no confusioun.

NIL, quod he, have noon excepcioun;
And out he caughte a knyf, as rasour
kene;

Hyd this, quod he, that hit be nat ysene;
And, whan thyn husbond is to bedde ygo,
Whyl that he slepeth, cut his throte atwo,
for in my dremes hit is warned me
How that my newew shal my bane be,
But whiche I noot, wherfor I wol be siker.
Yif thou sey nay, we two shul have a biker
As I have seyde, by him that I have sworn.

THIS Ypermistra hath ny her wit for-
lorn;

And, for to passen harmles of that
place,
She graunted him; ther was non other grace.
And therwithal a costrel taketh he,
And seyde: Herof a draught, or two or three,
Yif him to drinke, whan he goth to reste,
And he shal slepe as longe as ever thee leste,
The narcotiks and opies been so stronge:
And go thy wey, lest that him thinke longe.

OUT comth the bryd, & with ful sober
chere,
As is of maidens ofte the manere,
To chambre is broght with revel and with
songe,
And shortly, lest this tale be to longe,
This Lino and she ben sone broght to bedde:
And every wight out at the dore him spedde.

THIS night is wasted, and he fel aslepe;
ful tenderly beginneth she to wepe.
She rist her up, and dredfully she quaketh,
As doth the braunche that Zephirus shaketh,
And husht were alle in Argon that citee.
As cold as any frost now wexeth she;
for pite by the herte her streyneth so,
And dreed of deeth doth her so moche wo,
That thryes down she fil in swiche a were.
She rist her up, and stakereth heer and there,
And on her handes faste loketh she.
Alas! and shul my handes bloody be?
I am a maid, and, as by my nature,
And by my semblant and by my vesture,
Myn handes been nat shapen for a knyf,
As for to reve no man fro his tyf.
What devil have I with the knyf to do?
And shal I have my throte corve atwo?
Than shal I blede, alas! and me beshende;
And nedes cost this thing mot have an ende;
Or he or I mot nedes lese our tyf.
Now certes, quod she, sin I am his wyf,
And hath my feith, yit is it bet for me
for to be deed in wyfely honestee

Than be a traitour living in my shame.
Be as be may, for earnest or for game,
He shal awake, and ryse and go his way
Out at this goter, or that hit be day!
And weep ful tenderly upon his face,
And in her armes gan him to embrace,
And him she roggeth and awaketh softe;
And at the window leep he fro the lofte
Whan she hath warned him, and doon him
bote.

THIS Lino swift was, and light of fote,
And from his wyf he ran a ful good pas.
This sely woman is so wayk, alas!
And helples so, that, or that she fer wente,
Her cruel fader dide her for to hente.
Alas! Lino! why art thou so unkinde?
Why ne haddeest thou remembred in thy minde
To taken her, and lad her forth with thee?
for, whan she saw that goon away was he,
And that she mighte nat so faste go,
Ne folwen him, she sette her doun right tho,
Til she was caught and fetered in prisoun.
This tale is seid for this conclusioun....

Unfinished.

The
Legend of
Goode
Wimmen

THE HOUSE OF FAME. LIBER PRIMUS.



Incipit Liber Primus. Proem.



TURN E AS EVERY DREEM TO GODE!
for hit is wonder, by the rode,
To my wit, what causeth swevenes
Either on morwes, or on evenes;
And why the effect folweth of somme,
And of somme hit shal never come;

Why that is an avisoun,
And this a revelacioun;
Why this a dreem, why that a sweven,
And nat to every man like even;
Why this a fantom, these oracles,
I noot; but whoso of these miracles
The causes knoweth bet than I,
Devyne he; for I certeinly
Ne can hem noght, ne never thinke
To besily my wit to swinke,
To knowe of hir signifiante
The gendres, neither the distaunce
Of tymes of hem, ne the causes
forwhy this more than that cause is;
As if folkes complexions
Make hem dreem of reflexions;
Or elles thus, as other sayn,
for to greet feblesse of brayn,
By abstinence, or by seeknesse,
Prison, stewe, or greet distresse;
Or elles by disordinaunce
Of naturel acustomaunce
That som man is to curious
In studie, or melancolious,
Or thus, so inly ful of drede,
That no man may him bote bede;

Or elles, that devocioun
Of somme, and contemplacioun
Causeth swiche dreemes ofte;
Or that the cruel tyf unsofte
Which these ilke lovers leden,
That hope over muche or dreden,
That purely hir impressiouns
Causeth hem avisouns;
Or if that spirits have the might
To make folk to dreem anight
Or if the soule, of propre kinde,
Be so parfit, as men finde,
That hit forwot that is to come,
And that hit warneth alle and somme
Of everiche of hir aventures
By avisouns, or by figures,
But that our flesh ne hath no might
To understonden hit aright,
for hit is warned to derkly;
But why the cause is, noght wot I.
Wel worthe, of this thing, grete clerkes,
That trette of this and other werkes;
for I of noon opinioun
Nillas now make mencoun,
But only that the holy rode
Turne us every dreem to gode!
for never, sith that I was born,
Neno man elles, me biforn,
Mette, I trowe stedfastly,
So wonderful a dreem as I
The tenthe day dide of Decembre,
The which, as I can now remembre,
I wol yow tellen every del.

The Invocation.

BUT at my ginning, trusteth
wel,
I wol make invocacioun,
With special devocioun,
Unto the god of slepe
anoon,
That dwelleth in a cave of
stoon
Upon a stream that comth
fro Lete,
That is a flood of helle unsweete;
Besyde a folk men clepe Cimerie,
Ther slepeth ay this god unmerie
With his slepy thousand sones
That alway for to slepe hir wone is;
And to this god, that I of rede,
Preye I, that he wol me spede
My sweven for to telle aright,
If every dreem stonde in his might.
And he, that mover is of al
That is and was, and ever shal,
So yive hem joye that hit here
Of alle that they dreem toye,
And for to stonden alle in grace
Of hir loves, or in what place
That hem wer levest for to stonde,
And shelde hem fro povert and shonde,
And fro unhappe and ech disease,
And sende hem al that may hem plesse,

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That take hit wel, and scorne hit noght,
Ne hit misdemen in her thoght
Through malicious entencion.
And whoso, through presumpcioun,
Or hate or scorne, or through envye,
Dispyt, or jape, or vilanye,
Misdeme hit, preye I Jesus God
That (dreem he barfoot, dreem he shod),
That every harm that any man
Hath had, sith that the world began,
Befalle him therof, or he sterve,
And graunte he mote hit ful deserve,
Lo! with swich a conclusioun
As had of his avisoun
Cresus, that was king of Lyde,
That high upon a gebet dyde!
This prayer shal he have of me;
I am no bet in charite!
Now herkne, as I have you seyde,
What that I mette, or I labreyd.

The Dream.

Of Decembre the tenthe day,
Whan hit was night, to
slepe I lay
Right ther as I was wont
to done,
And fil on slepe wonder
sone,
As he that wery was forgo
On pilgrimage myles two
To the corseynt Leonard,
To make lythe of that was hard.

BUT as I sleep, me mette I was
Within a temple ymad of glas;
In whiche ther were mo images
Of gold, stondinge in sondry stages,
And mo riche tabernacles,
And with perre mo pinacles,
And mo curious portreyntures,
And queynte maner of figures
Of olde werke, then I saw ever.
for certeynly, I niste never
Wher that I was, but wel wiste I,
Hit was of Venus redely,
The temple; for, in portreyture,
I saw anoon right hir figure
Naked fletinge in a see.
And also on hir heed, parde,
Hir rose garlond whyt and reed,
And hir comb to kembe hir heed,
Hir dowves, and daun Cupido,
Hir blinde sone, and Vulcano,
That in his face was ful broun.

BUT as I romed up and down,
I fond that on a wal ther was
Thus writen, on a table of bras:
I wol now singe, if that I can,
The armes, and also the man,
That first cam, through his destinee,
fugitif of Troye contree,
In Itaille, with ful moche pyne,
Unto the strondes of Lavyne.
And tho began the story anoon,

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As I shal telle yow echoon.
FIRST saw I the destruccioun
Of Troye, through the Greek
Sinoun,
That with his false forsweringe,
And his chere and his lesinge
Made the hors broght into Troye,
Thorgh which Troyens loste al hir joye.
And after this was grave, alas!
How Iliou assailed was
And wonne, and king Priam yslayn,
And Polites his sone, certayn,
Dispitously, of dan Pirrus.

AND next that saw I how Venus,
Whan that she saw the castel brende,
Doun fro the hevne gan descende,
And bad hir sone Eneas flee;
And how he fledde, and how that he
Escaped was from al the pres,
And took his fader, Anchises,
And bar him on his bakke away,
Cryinge, Alas, and welaway!
The whiche Anchises in his honde
Bar the goddes of the londe,
Thilke that unbrende were.

AND I saw next, in alle this fere,
How Creusa, daun Eneas wyf,
Which that he lovede as his lyf,
And hir yonge son Julo,
And eek Ascanius also,
Fledden eek with drery chere,
That hit was pitee for to here;
And in a forest, as they wente,
At a turninge of a wente,
How Creusa was ylost, alas!
That deed, but noot I how, she was;
How he hir soughte, and how hir goost
Bad him to flee the Grekes ost,
And seyde, he moste unto Itaille,
As was his destinee, sauns faille;
That hit was pitee for to here,
Whan hir spirit gan appere,
The wordes that she to him seyde,
And for to kepe hir sone him preyde.
Ther saw I graven eek how he,
His fader eek, and his meynee,
With his shippes gan to sayle
Toward the contree of Itaille,
As streight as that they mighte go.

THER saw I thee, cruel Juno,
That art daun Jupiteres wyf,
That hast yhated, al thy lyf,
Al the Troyanisshe blood,
Renne and crye, as thou were wood,
On Eolus, the god of windes,
To blowen out, of alle kindes,
So loude, that he shulde drenche
Lord and lady, grome and wenche
Of al the Troyan nacioun,
Withoute any savacioun.

THER saw I swich tempeste aryse,
That every herte mighte agryse,
To see hit peynted on the walle.

THER saw I graven eek withalle,
Venus, how ye, my lady dcre,
Wepinge with ful woful chere,
Prayen Jupiter an hye
To save and kepe that navye
Of the Troyan Eneas,
Sith that he hir sone was.

THER saw I Joves Venus kisse,
And graunted of the tempest lisse.
Ther saw I how the tempest stente,
And how with alle pyne he wente,
And prevely took arrivage
In the contree of Cartage;
And on the morwe, how that he
And a knight, hight Achatee,
Metten with Venus that day,
Goinge in a queynt array,
As she had ben an hunteresse,
With wind blowinge upon hir tresse;
How Eneas gan him to pleyne,
Whan that he knew hir, of his peyne;
And how his shippes dreynthe were,
Or elles lost, he niste where;
How she gan him comforte tho,
And bad him to Cartage go,
And ther he shulde his folk finde,
That in the see were left behinde.

AND, shortly of this thing to pace,
She made Eneas so in grace
Of Dido, queene of that contree,
That, shortly for to tellen, she
Becam his love, and leet him do
That that wedding longeth to.
What shulde I speke more queynte,
Or peyne me my wordes peynte,
To speke of love? hit wol not be;
I can not of that facultee.
And eek to telle the manere
How they aqueynteden in fere,
Hit were a long proces to telle,
And over long for yow to dwelle.

THER saw I grave, how Eneas
Tolde Dido every cas,
That him was tid upon the see.

AND after grave was, how she
Made of him, shortly, at oo word,
Hir lyf, hir love, hir lust, hir lord;
And dide him al the reverence,
And leyde on him al the dispence,
That any woman mighte do,
Weninge hit had al be so,
As he hir swoor; and herby demed
That he was good, for he swich semed.
Alas! what harm doth apparence,
Whan hit is fals in existence!
For he to hir a traitour was;

THER saw I swich tempeste aryse,
That every herte mighte agryse,
To see hit peynted on the walle.

Revered many a shrewed vyce;
Therfor be no wight so nyce,
To take a love only for chere,
For speche, or for frendly manere;
For this shal every woman finde
That som man, of his pure kinde,
Wol shewen outward the faireste,
Til he have caught that what him leste;
And thanne wol he causes finde,
And swere how that she is unkinde,
Or fals, or prevy, or double was.
Al this seye I by Eneas
And Dido, and hir nyce lest,
That lovede al to sone a gest;
Therfor I wol seye a proverbe,
That he that fully knoweth therbe
May saufly leye hit to his ye,
Withoute dred, this is no lye.

AT let us speke of Eneas,
How he betrayed hir, alas!
And lefte hir ful unkindely.
So whan she saw al utterly,
That he wolde hir of trouthe
faile,

And wende fro hir to Itaille,
She gan to wringe hir hondes two.
ALAS! quod she, what me is wol!
Alas! is every man thus trewe,
That every yere wolde have a newe,
If hit so longe tyme dure,
Or elles three, peraventure?
As thus: of oon he wolde have fame
In magnifying of his name;
Another for frendship, seith he;
And yet ther shal the thridde be,
That shal be taken for delyt,
Lo, or for singular profyt.

In swiche wordes gan to pleyne
Dido of grete peyne,
As me mette redely:
Non other auctour alegge I.
Alas! quod she, my swete herte,
Have pitee on my sorwes smerte,
And slee me not! go noght away!
O woful Dido, welaway!
Quod she to hirselve tho,
O Eneas! what wil ye do?
O, that your love, ne your bonde,
That ye han sworn with your right honde,
Ne my cruel deeth, quod she,
May holde yow still heer with me!
O, haveth of my deeth pitee!
Ywis, my dere herte, ye
Knowen ful wel that never yit,
As ferforth as I hadde wit,
Agilte I yow in thought ne deed.
O, have ye men swich goodliheed
In speche, and never a deel of trouthe?
Alas, that ever hadde routhe
Any woman on any man!
Now see I wel, and telle can,
We wrecched wimmen conne non art;
For certeyn, for the more part,

Thus we be served everichone.
How sore that ye men conne grone,
Anoon, as we have yow receyved,
Certeynly we ben deceyved;
For, though your love laste a sesoun,
Wayte upon the conclusioun,
And eek how that ye determynen,
And for the more part diffynen.

WELAWAY that I was born!
For through yow is my name lorn,
And alle myn actes red and songe
Over al this lond, on every tonge.
O wikke fame! for ther nis
Nothing so swift, lo, as she is!
O, sooth is, every thing is wist,
Though hit be kevered with the mist.
Eek, thogh I mighte duren ever,
That I have doon, rekever I never,
That I ne shal be seyde, alas,
Yshamed be through Eneas,
And that I shal thus juged be:
Lo, right as she hath doon, now she
Wol do eftsones, hardily.

Thus seyth the peple prevely.
AT that is doon, nis not to done;
Al hir compleynt ne al hir mone,
Certeyn, availeth hir not a stre.
AND whan she wiste sothly he
Was forth unto his shippes goon,
She in hir chambre wente anoon,
And called on hir suster Anne,
And gan hir to compleyne thanne;
And seyde, that she cause was
That she first lovede Eneas,
And thus counseilled hir therto.
But what! when this was seyde and do,
She roof hirselve to the herte,
And deyde through the wounde smerte.
But al the maner how she deyde,
And al the wordes that she seyde,
Whoso to knowe hit hath purpos,
Reed Virgile in Eneidos
Or the Epistle of Ovyde,
What that she wroot or that she dyde;
And nere hit to long to endyte,
By God, I wolde hit here wryte.

AT, welaway! the harm, the routhe,
That hath betid for swich untrouthe,
As men may ofte in bokes rede,
And al day seen hit yet in dede,
That for to thenken hit, a tene is.

LO, Demophon, duk of Athenis,
How he forswor him ful falsly,
And trayed Phillis wikkedly,
That kinges doghter was of Trace,
And falsly gan his terme pace;
And when she wiste that he was
fals,
She heng hirself right by the hals,
For he had do hir swich untrouthe;
Lo! was not this a wo and routhe?
SEEK lo! how fals and reccheles
Was to Briseida Achilles,



And Paris to Oenone;
And Jason to Isiphile;
And eft Jason to Medea;
And Ercules to Dyanira;
for he lefte hir for Iole,
That made him cacche his deeth, parde.

NOW fals eek was he, Theseus;
That, as the story telleth us,
How he betrayed Adriane;
The devel be his soules bane!
for had he laughed, had he loured,
he moste have be al devoured,
If Adriane ne had ybe!
And, for she had of him pitee,
She made him fro the dethe escape,
And he made hir a ful fals jape;
for after this, within a while
he lefte hir slepinge in an yle,
Deserte alone, right in the see,
And stal away, and leet hir be;
And took hir suster Phedra tho
With him, and gan to shippe go.
And yet he had ysworn to here,
On al that ever he mighte swere,
That, so she saved him his tyf,
he wolde have take hir to his wyf;
for she desired nothing elles,
In certein, as the book us telles.

BUT to excusen Eneas
fulliche of al his greet trespas,
The book seyth, Mercurie, sauns
faile,
Bad him go into Itaille,
And leve Auffyrykes regioun,
And Dido and hir faire toun.

HO saw I grave, how to Itaille
Daun Eneas is go to saile;
And how the tempest al began,
And how he loste his steresman,
Which that the sterc, or he took keep,
Smot overbord, lo! as he sleep.

AND also saw I how Sibyle
And Eneas, besyde an yle,
To helle wente, for to see
his fader, Anchises the free.
How he ther fond Palinurus,
And Dido, and eek Deiphebus;
And every tourment eek in helle
Saw he, which is long to telle.
Which whoso willet for to knowe,
he moste rede many a rowe
On Virgile or on Claudian,
Or Daunte, that hit telle can.

HO saw I grave at tharivaile
That Eneas had in Itaille;
And with king Latine his trettee,

And alle the batailles that he
Was at himself, and eek his knyghtes,
Or he had al ywonne his rightes;
And how he Turnus refte his tyf,
And wan Lavyna to his wyf;
And al the marvelous signals
Of the goddes celestials;
How, maugre Juno, Eneas,
for al hir sleighte and hir compas,
Acheved al his aventure;
for Jupiter took of him cure
At the prayere of Venus;
The whiche I preye alway save us,
And us ay of our sorwes lighte!

WHEN I had seyen al this sighte
In this noble temple thus,
A Lord! thoughte I, that madest us,
Yet saw I never swich noblesse
Of images, ne swich richesse,
As I saw graven in this chirche;
But not woot I who dide hem wirche,
Ne wher I am, ne in what contree.
But now wol I go out and see,
Right at the wicket, if I can
See owher stering any man,
That may me telle wher I am.

WHEN I out at the dores cam,
I faste aboute me beheld.
Then saw I but a large feld,

As fer as that I mighte see,
Withouthen toun, or hous, or tree,
Or bush, or gras, or ered lond;
for al the feld nas but of sond
As smal as man may see yet lye
In the desert of Libye;
Ne I no maner creature,
That is yformed by nature,
Ne saw, me for to rede or wisse.
O Crist, thoughte I, that art in blisse,
fro fantom and illusioun
Me save! and with devocioun
Myn yen to the heven I caste.

HO was I war, lo! at the laste,
That faste by the sonne, as hye
As kenne mighte I with myn ye,
Me thoughte I saw an egle sore,
But that hit semed moche more
Then I had any egle seyn.
But this as sooth as deeth, certeyn,
hit was of golde, and shoon so brighte,
That never saw men such a sighte,
But if the heven hadde ywonne
A newe of golde another sonne;
So shoon the egles fethres brighte,
And somewhat downward gan hit lighte.

Explicit Liber Primus.

THE Hous OF FAME. LIBER SECUNDUS.

Incipit Liber Secundus. Proem.



HERKNETH, EVERY MANER MAN
That English understonde can,
And listeth of my dreem to lere;
for now at erste shul ye here
So selly an avisoun,
That Isaye, ne Scipioun,
Ne king Nabugodonosor,
Pharo, Turnus, ne Elcanor,
Ne mette swich a dreem as this!
Now faire blisful, O Cipris,
So be my favour at this tyme!

And ye, me to endyte and ryme
Helpeth, that on Parnaso dwelle
By Elicon the clere welle.

THOUGH, that wroot al that I mette,
And in the tresorie hit shette
Of my brayn! now shal men see
If any vertu in thee be,
To tellen al my dreem aright;
Now kythe thyng engyn and might!

The Dream.

HIS egle, of which I
have yow told,
That shoon with feth-
res as of gold,
Which that so hye gan
to sore,
I gan beholde more
and more,
To see hir beautee and
the wonder;
But never was ther dint of thonder,
Ne that thing that men calle foudre,
That smoot somtyme a tour to poudre,
And in his swifte coming brende,
That so swythe gan descende,
As this foul, whan hit behelde
That I aroume was in the felde;
And with his grimme pawes stronge,
Within his sharpe nayles longe,
Me, fleinge, at a swappe he hente,
And with his sours agayn up wente,



Me caryng in his clawes starke
As lightly as I were a lark,
How high, I can not telle yow,
For I am up, I niste how.
For so astonied and aswaved
Was every vertu in my heved,
What with his sours and with my drede,
That al my feling gan to dede;
Forwhy hit was to greet affray.

THUS I longe in his clawes lay,
Til at the laste he to me spak
In mannes vois, and seyde: Awak!
And be not so agast, for shame!
And called me tho by my name.
And, for I sholde the bet abreyde,
Me mette, Awak, to me he seyde,
Right in the same vois and stevene
That useth oon I coude nevene;
And with that vois, soth for to sayn,
My minde cam to me agayn;
For hit was goodly seyde to me,
So nas hit never wont to be.

AND herewithal I gan to stere,
And he me in his feet to bere,
Til that he felte that I had hete,
And felte eek tho myn herte bete.
And tho gan he me to disporte,
And with wordes to comferte,

And sayde twyes: Seynte Marie!
Thou art noyous for to carie,
And nothing nedeth hit, parde!
For also wis God helpe me
As thou non harm shalt have of this;
And this cas, that betid thee is,
Is for thy lore and for thy prow;
Let see! darst thou yet loke now?
Be ful assured, boldly,
I am thy frend, And therewith I
Can for to wondren in my minde.
O God, thoughte I, that madest kinde,
Shal I non other weyes dye?
Wher Joves wol me stellifye,
Or what thing may this signifye?
I neither am Enok, ne Elye,
Ne Romulus, ne Ganymede
That was ybore up, as men rede,
To hevne with dan Jupiter,
And maad the goddes boteler.

Of this was tho my fantasye!
But he that bar me gan espye
That I so thoughte, and seyde this:
Thou demest of thyself amis;
For Joves is not therabout,
I dar wel putte thee out of doute,
To make of thee as yet a sterre,
But er I bere thee moche ferre,

I wol thee telle what I am,
And whider thou shalt, and why I cam
To done this, so that thou take
Good herte, and not for fere quake.
Gladly, quod I. Now wel, quod he:
First I, that in my feet have thee,
Of which thou hast a feer and wonder,
Am dwelling with the god of thonder,
Which that men callen Jupiter,
That dooth me flee ful ofte fer
To do al his comaundement.
And for this cause he hath me sent
To thee: now herke, by thy trouthe!
Certeyn, he hath of thee routhe,
That thou so longe trewely
Hast served so ententifly
his blinde newew Cupido,
And fair Venus goddesse also,
Withoute guerdoun ever yit,
And nevertheles hast set thy wit,
Although that in thy hede ful lyte is,
To make bokes, songes, dytees,
In ryme, or elles in cadence,
As thou best canst, in reverence
Of Love, and of his servants eke,
That have his servise soght, and seke;
And peynest thee to preyse his art,
Although thou haddest never part;
Wherfor, also God me blesse,
Joves halt hit greet humbleesse
And vertu eek, that thou wolt make
Nicht ful ofte thyn heed to ake,
In thy studie so thou wrytest,
And evermo of love endytest,
In honour of him and preysinges,
And in his folkes furtheringes,
And in hir matere al devysest,
And nocht him nor his folk despysest,
Although thou mayst go in the daunce
Of hem that him list not avaunce.

THERFOR, as I seyde, ywis,
Jupiter considereth this,
And also, beau sir, other thinges;
That is, that thou hast no tydinges
Of Loves folk, if they be glade,
Ne of noght elles that God made;
And nocht only fro fer contree
That ther no tyding comth to thee,
But of thy verray neyghebores,
That dwellen almost at thy dores,
Thou herest neither that ne this;
for whan thy labour doon al is,
And hast ymaad thy rekeninges,
In stede of reste and newe thinges,
Thou gost hoom to thy hous anon;
And, also domb as any stoon,
Thou sittest at another boke,
Til fully daswed is thy loke,
And livest thus as an hermyte,
Although thyn abstinence is lyte.

AND therfor Joves, through his
grace,
Wol that I bere thee to a place,

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Which that hight The Hous of fame,
To do thee som disport and game,
In som recompensacioun
Of labour and devocioun
That thou hast had, to causeles,
To Cupido, the reccheles!
And thus this god, thorgh his meryte,
Wol with som maner thing thee quyte,
So that thou wolt be of good chere,
for truste wel, that thou shalt here,
When we be comen ther I seye,
No wonder thinges, dar I leye,
Of Loves folke mo tydinges,
Bothe soth/sawes and lesinges;
And mo loves newe begonne,
And longe yserved loves wonne,
And mo loves casuelly
That been betid, no man wot why,
But as a blind man stert an hare;
And more jolytee and fare,
Whyl that they finde love of stele,
As thinketh hem, and overal wele;
Mo discords, and mo jelousyes,
Mo murmurs, and mo novelryes,
And mo dissimulaciouns,
And feyned reparaciouns;
And mo berdes in two houres
Withoute rasour or sisoures
Ymaad, then greynes be of sondes;
And eke mo holdinge in bondes,
And also mo renovaunces
Of olde forleten aqueyntaunces;
Mo love/dayes and acordes
Then on instruments ben cordes;
And eke of loves mo eschaunges
Than ever cornes were in graunges;
Anethe maistow trown this?
Quod he. No, helpe me God so wis!
Quod I. No? why? quod he. For hit
Were impossible, to my wit,
Though that fame hadde al the pyes
In al a realme, and al the spyes,
How that yet she shulde here al this,
Or they espye hit. O yis, yis!
Quod he to me, that can I preve
By resoun, worthy for to leve,
So that thou yeve thyn advertence
To understonde my sentence.

FIRST shalt thou heren wher she
dwelleth,
And so thyn owne book hit telleth;
Hir paleys stant, as I shal seye,
Right even in middes of the weye
Betwixen hevne, erthe, and see;
That, whatsoever in al these thre
Is spoken, in privee or aperte,
The wey therto is so overte,
And stant eek in so juste a place,
That every soun mot to hit pace,
Or what so comth fro any tonge,
Be hit roured, red, or songe,
Or spoke in seurtee or drede,
Certeyn, hit moste thider nede.

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The Hous
of fame.
Liber II.

NOW herkne wel; forwhy I wille
Tellen thee a propre skile,
And worthy demonstracioun
In myn imagynacioun.
GEFFREY, thou wost right wel this,
That every kindly thing that is,
Hath a kindly stede ther he
May best in hit conserved be;
Unto which place every thing,
Through his kindly enclyning,
Moveth for to come to,
Whan that hit is away therfro;
As thus; lo, thou mayst al day see
That any thing that hevye be,
As stoon or leed, or thing of wighte,
And ber hit never so hye on highte,
Lat go thyn hand, hit falleth down.
LIGHT so seye I by fyre or soun,
Or smoke, or other thinges lighte,
Alwey they seke upward on highte;
Whyl ech of hem is at his large,
Light thing up, and downward charge.
ND for this cause mayst thou see,
That every river to the see
Enclyned is to go, by kinde.
And by these skilles, as I finde,
Hath fish dwellinge in floode and see,
And trees eek in erthe be.
Thus every thing, by this resoun,
Hath his propre mansioun,
To which hit seketh to repaire;
As ther hit shulde not apaire.
Lo, this sentence is knowne couthe
Of every philosophres mouthe,
As Aristotle and dan Platon,
And other clerkes many oon;
And to confirme my resoun,
Thou wost wel this, that speche is soun,
Or elles no man mighte hit here;
Now herkne what I wol thee lere.
SOUN is noght but air ybroken,
And every speche that is spoken,
Loud or privee, foul or fair,
In his substaunce is but air;
For as flaumbe is but lighted smoke,
Right so soun is air ybroke.
But this may be in many wyse,
Of which I wil thee two devyse,
As soun that comth of pype or harpe;
For whan a pype is blowen sharpe,
The air is twist with violence,
And rent; lo, this is my sentence;
Eek, whan men harpe/stringes smyte,
Whether hit be moche or lyte,
Lo, with the strook the air tobreketh;
Right so hit breketh whan men speketh.
Thus wost thou wel what thing is speche.
NOw hennesforth I wol thee teche,
How every speche, or noise, or soun,
Through his multiplicacioun,
Thogh hit were pyped of a mouse,
Moot nede come to fames House.
I preve hit thus, tak hede now,

By experience; for if that thou
Throwe on water now a stoon,
Wel wost thou, hit wol make anon
A litel roundel as a cerle,
Paraventure brood as a covercle;
And right anon thou shalt see weel,
That wheel wol cause another wheel,
And that the thridde, and so forth, brother,
Every cerle causing other,
Wyder than himselve was;
And thus, fro roundel to compas,
Ech aboute other goinge,
Caused of othres steringe,
And multiplying evermo,
Til that hit be so fer ygo
That hit at bothe brinkes be.
Although thou mowe hit not ysee
Above, hit goth yet alway under,
Although thou thenke hit a gret wonder.
And whoso seith of trouthe I varie,
Bid him proven the contrarie.
And right thus every word, ywis,
That loude or privee spoken is,
Moveth first an air aboute,
And of this moving, out of doute,
Another air anon is meved,
As I have of the water preved,
That every cerle causeth other.
Right so of air, my leve brother;
Everich air in other stereth
More and more, and speche up bereth,
Or vois, or noise, or word, or soun,
Ay through multiplicacioun,
Til hit be atte Hous of fame;
Tak hit in earnest or in game.
NOw have I told, if thou have minde,
How speche or soun, of pure kinde,
Enclyned is upward to meve;
This, mayst thou fele, wel I preve.
And that the mansioun, ywis,
That every thing enclyned to is,
Hath his kindeliche stede:
Chan sheweth hit, withouten drede,
That kindly the mansioun
Of every speche, of every soun,
Be hit either foul or fair,
Hath his kinde place in air.
And sin that every thing, that is
Out of his kinde place, ywis,
Moveth thider for to go
If hit aweye be therfro,
As I before have preved thee,
Hit seweth, every soun, pardee,
Moveth kindly to pace
Al up into his kindly place.
And this place of which I telle,
Ther as fame list to dwelle,
Is set amidde of these three,
Heven, erthe, and eek the see,
As most conservatif the soun.
Chan is this the conclusioun,
That every speche of every man,
As I thee telle first began,

Moveth up on high to pace
Kindly to fames place.
ELLE me this feithfully,
Have I not preved thus simply,
Withouten any subtiltee
Of speche, or gret prolixitee
Of termes of philosophye,
Of figures of poetrye,
Or colours of rethoryke?
Pardee, hit oghte thee to lyke;
For hard langage and hard matere
Is encombrous for to here
At ones; wost thou not wel this?
And I answerde, and seyde, Yis.
And I quod he, lo, so I can
Lewedly to a lewed man
Speke, and shewe him swiche skiles,
That he may shake hem by the biles,
So palpable they shulden be.
But tel me this, now pray I thee,
How thinkst thee my conclusioun?
Quod he, A good persuasioun,
Quod I, hit is; and lyk to be
Right so as thou hast preved me.
By God, quod he, and as I leve,
Thou shalt have yit, or hit be eve,
Of every word of this sentence
A preve, by experience;
And with thyn eres heren wel
Top and tail, and everydel,
That every word that spoken is
Comth into fames Hous, ywis,
As I have seyde; what wilt thou more?
And with this word upper to sore
He gan, and seyde: By Seynt Jame!
Now wil we speken al of game.
NOw farest thou? quod he to me.
Wel, quod I, Now see, quod he,
By thy trouthe, yond adoun,
Wher that thou knowest any toun,
Or hous, or any other thing,
And whan thou hast of ought knowing,
Loke that thou warne me,
And I anon shal telle thee
How fer that thou art now therfro.
And beheld felde and plaines,
And now hilles, and now mountaines,
Now valeys, and now forestes,
And now, unethes, grete bestes;
Now riveres, now citees,
Now tounes, and now grete trees,
Now shippes sailinge in the see.
AT thus sone in a whyle he
Was flowen fro the grounde so
hye,
That al the world, as to myn ye,
No more semed than a prikke;
Or elles was the air so thikke
That I ne mighte not discerne.
With that he spak to me as yerne,
And seyde: Seestow any toun
Ought thou knowest yonder doun?

SEYDE Nay. No wonder nis,
Quod he, for half so high as this
Nas Alexander Macedo;
Ne the king, dan Scipio,
That saw in dreame, at point devys,
Helle and erthe, and paradys;
Ne eek the wrecche Dedalus,
Ne his child, nyce Icarus,
That fleigh so highe that the hete
His winges malt, and he fel wete
Inmid the see, and ther he dreynete,
For whom was made moch compleynte.
NOw turn upward, quod he, thy face,
And behold this large place,
This air; but loke thou ne be
Adrad of hem that thou shalt see;
For in this regioun, certein,
Dwellet many a citezein,
Of which that speketh dan Plato.
These ben the cyrish bestes, lo!
ND so saw I al that meynne
Bothe goon and also flee.
Now, quod he tho, cast up
thyn ye;
See yonder, lo, the Galaxye,
Which men clepeth the Milky Wey,
for hit is whyt; and somme, parfey,
Callen hit Watlinge Strete;
That ones was ybrent with hete,
Whan the sonnes sone, the rede,
That highte Pheton, wolde lede
Algate his fader cart, and gye.
The cart hors gonne wel espye
That he ne coude no governaunce,
And gonne for to lepe and launce,
And beren him now up, now doun,
Til that he saw the Scorpioun,
Which that in heven a signe is yit.
And he, for ferde, loste his wit,
Of that, and leet the reynes goon
Of his hors; and they anon
Gonne up to mounte, and doun descende
Til bothe the eyr and erthe brende;
Til Jupiter, lo, atte laste,
Him slow, and fro the carte caste.
Lo, is it not a greet mischaunce,
To lete a fole han governaunce
Of thing that he can not demeine?
ND with this word, soth for to seyne,
He gan alway upper to sore,
And gladded me ay more and more,
So feithfully to me spak he.
NO gan I token under me,
And beheld the cyrish bestes,
Cloudes, mistes, and tempestes,
Snowes, hailes, reines, windes,
And thegendring in hir kindes,
And al the wey through whiche I cam;
O God, quod I, that made Adam,
Moch is thy might and thy noblesse!
ND tho thoughte I upon Boece,
That writ: A thought may flee so hye,
With fetheres of Philosophye,

The Hous
of fame.
Liber II.

To passen everich element;
And whan he bath so fer ywent,
Than may be seen, behind his bak,
Cloud, and al that I of spak.

THO gan I wexen in a were,
And seyde: I woot wel I am here;
But wher in body or in gost
I noot, ywis; but God, thou wost!
For more cleer entement
Nadde he me never yit ysent.
And than thoughte I on Marcian,
And eek on Antecaudian,
That sooth was hir descripcioun
Of al the hevenes region,
As fer as that I saw the preve;
Therfor I can hem now beleve.

ALTH that this egle gan to crye:
Lat be, quod he, thy fantasye;
Wilt thou lere of sterres aught?

Nay, certainly, quod I, right naught;
And why? for I am now to old.
Elles I wolde thee have told,
Quod he, the sterres names, lo,
And al the hevenes signes to,
And which they been. No fors, quod I.
Yis, pardee, quod he; wostow why?
for whan thou reddest poetrye,
How goddes gonne stellifye
Brid, fish, beste, or him or here,
As the Raven, or either Bere,
Or Ariones harpe fyn,
Castor, Pollux, or Delphyn,
Or Atlantes doughtres sevene,
How alle these arm set in hevne;
for though thou have hem ofte on honde,
Yet nostow not wher that they stonde.

NO fors, quod I, hit is no nede;
I leve as wel, so God me spede,
Hem that wryte of this matere,
As though I knew hir places here;
And eek they shynen here so bryghte,
Hit shulde shenden al my sighte,
To loke on hem. That may wel be,
Quod he. And so forth bar he me
A whyl, and than he gan to crye,
That never herde I thing so hye:
Now up the heed; for al is wel;
Seynt Julyan, lo, bon hostel!
See here the Hous of fame, lo!
Maistow not heren that I do?

WHAT? quod I. The grete soun,
Quod he, that rumbleth up and doun
In fames Hous, ful of tydinges,
Bothe of fair speche and chydinges,
And of fals and soth compounded.
Her kne wel; hit is not rouned.
Herestow not the grete swogh?
Yis, pardee, quod I, wel ynogh.
And what soun is it lyk? quod he.

Peter! lyk beting of the see,
Quod I, again the roches holowe,
Whan tempest doth the shippes
swalowe;
And lat a man stonde, out of doute,
A myle thens, and here hit route;
Or elles lyk the last humblinge
After the clappe of a thundringe,
When Joves hath the air ybete;
But hit doth me for fere swete.
Nay, dred thee not therof, quod he,
Hit is nothing wil byten thee;
Thou shalt non harm have, trewely.

AND with this word bothe he and I
As nigh the place arryved were
As men may casten with a spere.
I niste how, but in a strete

He sette me faire on my fete,
And seyde: Walke forth a pas,
And tak thyn aventure or cas,
That thou shalt finde in fames place.

OW, quod I, whyl we han space
To speke, or that I go fro thee,
for the love of God, tel me,
In sooth, that wil I of thee lere,
If this noise that I here

Be, as I have herd thee tellen,
Of folk that doun in erthe dwellen,
And comth here in the same wyse
As I thee herde of this devyse;
And that ther lyes body nis
In al that hous that yonder is,
That maketh al this loude fare?

NO, quod he, by Seynte Clare,
And also wis God rede me!
But o thinge I wil warne thee
Of the which thou wolt have wonder.
Lo, to the Hous of fame yonder
Thou wost how cometh every speche,
Hit nedeth noght thee eft to teche.
But understand now right wel this;
Whan any speche ycomen is
Up to the paleys, anon right
Hit wexeth lyk the same wight,
Which that the word in erthe spak,
Be hit clothed reed or blak;
And hath so verray his lyknesse
That spak the word, that thou wilt gesse
That hit the same body be,
Man or woman, he or she.

And is not this a wonder thing?
Yis, quod I tho, by hevne king!
And with this worde: farwel, quod he,
And here I wol abyden thee;
And God of hevne sende thee grace,
Som good to lermen in this place.
And I of him took leve anon.
And gan forth to the paleys goon.

Explicit liber secundus.

THE Hous OF FAME • LIBER TERCIVS.



Incipit Liber Tercius. Invocation.



GOD OF SCIENCE AND OF LIGHT,
Apollo, through thy grete might,
This litel laste book thou gye!
Nat that I wilne, for maistrye,
Here art poetical be shewed;
But, for the rym is light and lewed,
Yit make hit sumwhat agreable,
Though som vers faile in a sillable;

And that I do no diligence
To shewe craft, but o sentence.
And if, divyne vertu, thou
Wilt helpe me to shewe now
That in myn hede ymarked is,
Lo, that is for to menen this,
The Hous of fame to descriye,
Thou shalt see me go, as blyve,
Unto the nexte laire I see,
And kisse hit, for hit is thy tree;
Now entreth in my breste anon!...

The Dream.

WHAN I was fro this egle goon,
I gan beholde upon this place,
And certain, or I ferther pace,
I wol yow al the shap devyse
Of hous and site; and al the
wyse
How I gan to this place aproche
That stood upon so high a roche,
Hyer stant ther noon in Spaine.
But up I clomb with alle paine,
And though to clombe hit greved me,
Yit I ententif was to see,
And for to pouren wonder lowe,
If I coude any weyes knowe
What maner stoon this roche was;

for hit was lyk a thing of glas,
But that hit shoon ful more clere;
But of what congeled matere
Hit was, I niste redely.

Ut at the laste espyed I,
And found that hit was, every deel,
A roche of yse, and not of steel.
Thoughte I: By Seynt Thomas of Kent!
This were a feble foundement
To bidden on a place hye;
He oughte him litel glorifye
That heron bilt, God so me save!

Ho saw I al the half ygrave
With famous folkes names fele,
That had ybeen in mochel wele,
And hir fames wyde yblowe.
But wel unethes coude I knowe
Any lettres for to rede
Hir names by; for, out of drede,
They were almost of throwed so,
That of the lettres oon or two
Was molte away of every name,
So unfamous was wexe hir fame;
But men seyn: What may ever laste?

Ho gan I in myn herte caste,
That they were molte away with hete,
And not away with stormes bete.
For on that other syde I sey
Of this hille, that northward lay,
How hit was writen ful of names
Of folk that hadden grete fames
Of olde tyme, and yit they were
As fresshe as men had writen hem there
The selve day right, or that houre
That I upon hem gan to poure,
But wel I wiste what hit made;
Hit was conserved with the shade,
Al this wrytinge that I sy,
Of a castel, that stood on hy,
And stood eek on so cold a place,
That hete mighte hit not deface.

Ho gan I up the hille to goon,
And fond upon the coppe a woon,
That alle the men that ben on lyve
Ne han the cunning to descryve
The beautee of that ilke place,
Ne coude casten no compage
Swich another for to make,
That mighte of beautee be his make,
Ne be so wonderliche ywrought;
That hit astonieth yit my thought,
And maketh al my wit to swinke
On this castel to bethinke.
So that the grete craft, beautee,
The cast, the curiositee
Ne can I not to yow devyse,
My wit ne may me not suffyse.

Ut natheles al the substance
I have yit in my remembrance;
For why me thoughte, by Seynt Gyle!
Al was of stone of beryle,
Bothe castel and the tour,
And eek the halle, and every bour,

Withouten peces or joininges.
But many subtil compassinges,
Babewinnes and pinacles,
Imageries and tabernacles,
I saw; and ful eek of windowes,
As flakes falle in grete snowes,
And eek in ech of the pinacles
Weren sondry habitacles,
In whiche stoden, al withoute,
Ful the castel, al aboute,
Of alle maner of minstrales,
And gestours, that tellen tales
Bothe of weping and of game,
Of al that longeth unto fame.

Her herde I pleyen on an harpe
That souned bothe wel and sharpe,
Orpheus ful craftely,
And on his syde, faste by,
Sat the harper Orion,
And Eacides Chiron,
And other harpers many oon,
And the Bret Glascurion;
And smale harpers with her glees
Seten under hem in sees,
And gonne on hem upward to gape,
And countrefete hem as an ape,
Or as craft countrefeteth kinde.

Her fro hem, al by hemselfe,
Many thousand tymes twelve,
That maden loude menstralcyes
In cornemuse and shalmys,
And many other maner pype,
That craftely begonne pype
Bothe in doucet and in rede,
That ben at festes with the brede;
And many floute and litinge/home,
And pypes made of grene corne,
As han thise litel herde/gromes,
That kepen bestes in the bromes.

Her saugh I than Atiteris,
And of Athenes dan Pseustis,
And Marcia that lost her skin,
Bothe in face, body, and chin,
For that she wolde envyen, lo!
To pypen bet then Hpollo.
Ther saugh I famous, olde and yonge,
Pyppers of the Duche tonge,
To lerne love/daunces, springes,
Reyes, and these straunge thinges.

Ho saugh I in another place
Stonden in a large space,
Of hem that maken bloody soun
In trumpe, beme, and clarioun;
For in fight and blood/shedinge
Is used gladly clarioninge.

Her herde I trumpen Messenus,
Of whom that speket Virgilius,
Ther herde I Joab trumpe also,
Theodomas, and other mo;
And alle that used clarion
In Cataloigne and Hragon,
That in hir tyme famous were

To lerne, saugh I trumpe there.
Her saugh I sitte in other sees,
Pleyinge upon sondry glees,
Whiche that I cannot nevne,
Mo then sterres been in hevne,
Of whiche I nil as now not ryme,
For ese of yow, and losse of tyme:
For tyme ylost, this knowen ye,
By no way may recovered be.

Her saugh I pleyen jogelours,
Magiciens and tregetours,
And phitonesses, charmeresses,
Olde wicches, sorceresses,
That use exorsisaciouns,
And eek these fumigaciouns;
And clerkes eek, which comen wel
Al this magyke naturel,
That craftely don hir ententes,
To make in certeyn ascendentes,
Images, lo, through which magyk
To make a man ben hool or syk.
Ther saugh I thee, queen Medea,
And Circes eke, and Calipsa;
Ther saugh I Hermes Ballenus,
Lymote, and eek Simon Magus,
Ther saugh I, and knew hem by name,
That by such art don men han fame.

Her saugh I Colle tregetour
Upon a table of sicamour
Pleye an uncouth thing to telle;
I saugh him carien a wind-melle
Under a walsh-note shale.

Her should I make lenger tale
Of al the peple that I say,
Fro hennes into domesday?

Han I had al this folk beholde,
And fond me lous, and noght yholde,
And eft ymused longe whyle

Upon these walles of beryle,
That shoon ful lighter than a glas,
And made wel more than hit was
To semen, every thing, ywis,
As kinde thing of fames is;
I gan forth romen til I fond
The castel-yate on my right hond,
Which that so wel corven was
That never swich another nas;
And yit hit was by aventure
Ywrought, as often as by cure.

It nedeth noght yow for to tellen,
To make yow to longe dwellen,
Of this yates florissinges,
Ne of compasses, ne of kervinges,
Ne how they hatte in masoneries,
As corbets fulle of imageries.
But, Lord! so fair hit was to shewe,
For hit was al with gold behewe.
But in I wente, and that anon;
Ther mette I crying many oon:
A larges, larges, hold up wel!
God save the lady of this pel,
Oure owne gentil lady fame,
And hem that wilnen to have name

Of us! Thus herde I cryen alle,
And faste comen out of halle,
And shoken nobles and sterlinges.
And somme crowned were as kinges,
With crounes wrought ful of losenges;
And many riban, and many frenges
Were on hir clothes trewely.

Ho atte laste aspyed I
That pursevauntes and heraudes,
That cryen riche folkes laudes,
Hit weren alle; and every man
Of hem, as I yow tellen can,
Had on him throwen a vesture,
Which that men clepe a cote/armure,
Enbrowded wonderliche riche,
Although they nere nought yliche.
But noght nil I, so mote I thryve,
Been aboute to discryve
Al these armes that ther weren,
That they thus on hir cotes beren,
For hit to me were impossible;
Men mighte make of hem a bible
Twenty foot thikke, as I trowe.
For certeyn, whoso coude yknowe
Mighte ther alle the armes seen
Of famous folk that han ybeen
In Hufrike, Europe, and Asye,
Sith first began the chevalrye.

Of how shulde I now telle al this?
Ne of the halle eek what ned is
To tellen yow, that every wal
Of hit, and floor, and roof and al
Was plated half a fote thikke
Of gold, and that nas nothing wikke,
But, for to prove in alle wyse,
As fyn as ducat in Venyse,
Of whiche to lyte al in my pouche is?
And they wer set as thikke of nouchis
Fulle of the fynest stoness faire,
That men rede in the Lapidaire,
As greses grown in a mede;
But hit were al to longe to rede
The names; and therefore I pace.

Ut in this riche lusty place,
That fames halle called was,
Ful moche prees of folk ther nas,
Ne crouding, for to mocheil prees.
But al on hye, above a dees,
Sitte in a see imperial,
That maad was of a rubee al,
Which that a carbuncle is ycalled,
I saugh, perpetually ystalled,
A feminyne creature;
That never formed by nature
Nas swich another thing yseye.
For altherfirst, soth for to seye,
Me thoughte that she was so lyte,
That the lengthe of a cubyte
Was lenger than she semed be;
But thus sone, in a whyle, she
Hir tho so wonderliche streighte,
That with hir feet she therthe reighte,
And with hir heed she touched hevne,

Ther as shynen sterres sevene.
And therto eek, as to my wit,
I saugh a gretter wonder yit,
Upon hir eyen to beholde;
But certeyn I hem never tolde;
For as fele eyen hadde she
As fetheres upon foules be,
Or weren on the bestes foure,
That Goddes trone gunne honoure,
As John writ in thapocalips.
Hir heer, that oundy was and crips,
As burned gold hit shoon to see.
And sooth to tellen, also she
Had also fele upstonding eres
And tonges, as on bestes heres;
And on hir feet wexen saugh I
Partriches winges redely.

BUT, Lord! the perrie and the richesse
I saugh sitting on this goddesse!
And, Lord! the hevenish melodye
Of songes, ful of armonye,
I herde aboute her trone ysonge,
That al the paleys/walles ronge!
So song the mighty Muse, she
That cleped is Caliopee,
And hir eighte sustren eke,
That in hir face semen meke;
And evermo, eternally,

They songe of fame, as tho herde I:
Heried be thou and thy name,
Goddesse of renoun and of fame!

HO was I war, lo, atte laste,
As I myn eyen gan up caste,
That this ilke noble quene
On hir shuldres gan sustene
Bothe tharmes and the name
Of tho that hadde large fame;
Alexander, and Hercules
That with a sherte his lyf lees!
Thus fond I sitting this goddesse,
In nobley, honour, and richesse;
Of which I stinte a while now,
Other thing to tellen yow.

HO saugh I stonde on either syde,
Streight down to the dores wyde,
Fro the dees, many a pileer
Of metal, that shoon not ful cleer;
But though they nere of no richesse,
Yet they were maad for greet noblesse,
And in hem greet and hy sentence;
And folk of digne reverence,
Of whiche I wol yow telle fonde,
Upon the pileer saugh I stonde.

ALDERFIRST, lo, ther I sigh,
Upon a pileer stonde on high,
That was of lede and yren fyn,
Him of secte Saturnyn,
The Ebrayk Josephus, the olde,
That of Jewes gestes tolde;
And bar upon his shuldres hye
The fame up of the Jewerye.
And by him stoden other sevene,
Wyse and worthy for to nevene,

To helpen him bere up the charge,
Hit was so hevy and so large.
And for they writen of batailes,
As wel as other olde mervailles,
Therfor was, lo, this pileer,
Of which that I yow telle heer,
Of lede and yren bothe, ywis,
For yren Martes metal is,
Which that god is of bataile;
And the leed, withouten faile,
Is, lo, the metal of Saturne,
That hath ful large wheel to turne.
Tho stoden forth, on every rowe,
Of hem which that I coude knowe,
Thogh I hem noght by ordre telle,
To make yow to long to dwelle,
These, of whiche I ginne rede.

HER saugh I stonden, out of drede,
Upon an yren pileer strong,
That peynted was, al endelong,
With tygres blode in every place,
The Tholosan that highte Stace,
That bar of Thebes up the fame
Upon his shuldres, and the name
Also of cruel Achilles.

And by him stode, withouten lees,
ful wonder hye on a pileer
Of yren, he, the gret Omeer;
And with him Dares and Tytus
Before, and eek he, Lollus,
And Guido eek de Columpnis,
And English Gaufride eek, ywis;
And ech of these, as have I joye,
Was besy for to bere up Troye.
So hevy therof was the fame,
That for to bere hit was no game.

But yit I gan ful wel espye,
Betwix hem was a litel envye,
Oon seyde, Omere made lyes,
feyninge in his poetries,
And was to Grekes favorable;
Therfor held he hit but fable.

HO saugh I stonde on a pileer,
That was of tinned yren cleer,
That Latin poete, dan Virgyle,
That bore bath up a longe while
The fame of Pius Eneas.

AND next him on a pileer was,
Of coper, Venus clerk, Ovyde,
That hath ysowen wonder wyde
The grete god of Loves name.
And ther he bar up wel his fame,
Upon this pileer, also hye
As I might see hit with myn ye:
forwhy this halle, of whiche I rede
Was woxe on highte, lengthe and brede,
Wel more, by a thousand del,
Than hit was erst, that saugh I wel.

HO saugh I, on a pileer by,
Of yren wrought ful sternely,
The grete poete, daun Lucan,
And on his shuldres bar up than,
As highe as that I mighte see,

The fame of Julius and Pompee.
And by him stoden alle these clerkes,
That writen of Romes mighty werkes,
That, if I wolde hir names telle,
Al to longe mooste I dwelle.

AND next him on a pileer stode
Of soulfre, lyk as he were wood,
Dan Claudian, the soth to telle,
That bar up al the fame of helle,
Of Pluto, and of Proserpyne,
That quene is of the derke pyne.

HAT shulde I more telle of this?
The halle was al ful, ywis,
Of hem that writen olde gestes,
As ben on trees rokes nestes;
But hit a ful confus matere
Were al the gestes for to here,
That they of write, and how they highte.
But whyl that I beheld this sighte,
I herde a noise aprochen blyve,
That ferde as been don in an hye,
Agen her tyme of outfleying;
Right swiche a maner murmuringe,
For al the world, hit semed me.

HO gan I loke aboute and see,
That ther com entring in the halle
A right gret company withalle,
And that of sondry regions,
Of alleskynes condicions,
That dwelle in erthe under the mone,
Pore and ryche. And also sone
As they were come into the halle,
They gonne down on knees falle
Before this ilke noble quene,
And seyde: Graunte us, lady shene,
Ech of us, of thy grace, a bone!

And somme of hem she graunted some,
And somme she werned wel and faire;
And somme she graunted the contraire
Of hir axing utterly.
But thus I seye yow trewely,
What hir cause was, I niste.
For this folk, ful wel I wiste,
They hadde good fame ech deserved,
Althogh they were diversly served;
Right as hir auster, dame fortune,
Is wont to serven in comune.

OW herke how she gan to paye
That gonne hir of hir grace praye;
And yit, lo, al this companye
Seyden sooth, and noght a lye.

MADAME, seyden they, we be
folk that heer besechen thee,
That thou graunte us now good
fame,

And lete our werkes han that name;
In ful recompensioun
Of good werk, give us good renoun.

MERNE yow hit, quod she anon,
Ye gete of me good fame noon,
By God! and therfor go your wey.
Alas, quod they, and welaway!
Telle us, what may your cause be?

HOR me list hit noght, quod she;
No wight shal speke of yow, ywis,
Good ne harm, ne that ne this.

And with that word she gan to calle
hir messenger, that was in halle,
And bad that he shulde faste goon,
Up payne to be blind anon,
for Eolus, the god of winde;
In Trace ther ye shul him finde,
And bid him bringe his clarioun,
That is ful dyvers of his soun,
And hit is cleped Clere Laude,
With which he wont is to heraude
hem that me list ypreised be:
And also bid him how that he
Bringe his other clarioun,
That highte Sclaundre in every toun,
With which he wont is to diffame
hem that me list, and do hem shame.

HIS messenger gan faste goon,
And found wher, in a cave of stoon,
In a contree that highte Trace,
This Eolus, with harde grace,
held the windes in distresse,
And gan hem under him to presse,
That they gonne as beres rore,
he bond and pressed hem so sore.

HIS messenger gan faste crye:
Rys up, quod he, and faste hye,
Til that thou at my lady be;
And tak thy clarions eek with thee,
And speed thee forth. And he anon
Took to a man, that highte Triton,
his clariouns to bere tho,
And leet a certeyn wind to go,
That blew so hidously and hye,
That hit ne leftte not a skye
In al the welken longe and brood.

HIS Eolus nowher abood
Til he was come at fames feet,
And eek the man that Triton heet;
And ther he stode, as still as stoon.
And herewithal ther com anon
Another huge companye
Of gode folk, and gunne crye:
Lady, graunte us now good fame,
And lat our werkes han that name
Now, in honour of gentillesse,
And also God your soule blesse!
for we han wel deserved hit,
Therfor is right that we ben quit.

AS thryve I, quod she, ye shal faile,
Good werkes shal yow noght availle
To have of me good fame as now.
But wite ye what? I graunte yow,
That ye shal have a shrewed fame
And wikked loos, and worse name,
Though ye good loos have wel deserved.
Now go your wey, for ye be served;
And thou, dan Eolus, let see!
Tak forth thy trumpe anon, quod she,
That is cleped Sclaunder light,
And blow hir loos, that every wight



Speke of hem harm and shrewednesse,
In stede of good and worthinesse.
for thou shalt trumpe al the contraire
Of that they han don wel or faire.

ALAS! thoughte I, what adventures
han these sory creatures!
for they, amanges al the pres,
Shul thus be shamed gilteles!

But what! hit moste nedes be.
What did this Eolus, but he
Tok out his blakke trumpe of bras,
That fouler than the devil was,
And gan this trumpe for to blowe,
As al the world shulde overthrowe;
That throughout every regioun
Wente this foule trumpes soun,
As swift as pelet out of gonne,
Whan fyr is in the poudre ronne.
And swiche a smoke gan out wende
Out of his foule trumpes ende,
Blak, blo, grenish, swartish reed,
As doth wher that men melte leed,
Lo, al on high fro the tuell!
And therto oo thing saugh I wel,
That, the ferther that hit ran,
The gretter wexen hit began,
As doth the river from a welle,
And hit stank as the pit of helle.

Allas, thus was hir shame yronge,
And gilteles, on every tonge.

THO com the thridde companye,
And gunne up to the dees to hye,
And down on knees they fille anon,
And seyde: We ben everichon
folk that han ful trewely
Deserved fame rightfully,
And praye yow, hit mot be knowe,
Right as hit is, and forth yblowe.
I graunte, quod she, for me list
That now your gode werk be wist;
And yit ye shul han better loos,
Right in dispyt of alle your foos,
Than worthy is; and that anon:
Lat now, quod she, thy trumpe goon,
Thou Eolus, that is so blak;
And out thyn other trumpe tak
That highte Laude, and blow hit so
That through the world hir fame go
Al esely, and not to faste,
That hit be known atte laste.

AL gladly, lady myn, he seyde;
And out his trumpe of golde he
brayde
Anon, and sette hit to his mouthe,
And blew hit est, and west, and southe,
And north, as loude as any thunder,

That every wight hadde of hit wonder,
So brode hit ran, or than hit stente.
And, certes, al the breeth that wente
Out of his trumpes mouthe smelde
As men a potful bawme helde
Among a basket ful of roses;
This favour dide he til her loses.

AND right with this I gan aspye,
Ther com the ferthe companye,
But certeyn they were wonder fewe,

And gonne stonden in a rewe,
And seyden: Certes, lady bryghte,
We han don wel with al our mighte;
But we ne kepen have no fame.
Hyd our werkes and our name,
for Goddes love! for certes we
han certeyn doon hit for bountee,
And for no maner other thing.

I graunte yow al your asking,
Quod she; let your werk be deed.

ATH that aboute I clew myn heed,
And saugh anon the fift route
That to this lady gonne loute,
And down on knees anon to falle;
And to hir tho besoughten alle
To hyde hir gode werkes eek,
And seyde, they yeven noght a leek
for fame, ne for swich renoun;
for they, for contemplacioun
And Goddes love, hadde ywrought;
Ne of fame wolde they nought.

WHAT? quod she, and be ye wood?
And wene ye for to do good,
And for to have of that no fame?
Have ye dispyt to have my name?

Nay, ye shul liven everichoon!
Blow thy trumpe and that anon,
Quod she, thou Eolus, I hote,
And ring this folkes werk by note,
That al the world may of hit here.
And he gan blowe hir loos so clere
In his golden clarioun,
That through the world wente the soun,
So kenely, and eek so softe;
But atte laste hit was on/lofte.

THO com the sexte companye,
And gonne faste on fame crye.
Right verraily, in this manere
They seyden: Mercy, lady dere!

To telle certein, as hit is,
We han don neither that ne this,
But ydel al our lyf ybe.
But, natheles, yit preye we,
That we mowe han so good a fame,
And greet renoun and knownen name,
As they that han don noble gestes,
And achieved alle hir lestes,
As wel of love as other thing;
At was us never broche ne ring,
Ne elles nought, from wimmen sent,
Ne ones in hir herte yment
To make us only frendly chere,
But mighte temen us on bere;

h h

Yit lat us to the peple seme
Swiche as the world may of us deme,
That wimmen loven us for wood.
Hit shal don us as moche good,
And to our herte as moche availe
To countrepeise ese and travaile,
As we had wonne hit with labour;
for that is dere boght honour
At regard of our grete ese.
And yit thou most us more plesse;
Let us be holden eek, therto,
Worthy, wyse, and gode also,
And riche, and happy unto love.
for Goddes love, that sit above,
Though we may not the body have
Of wimmen, yet, so God yow save!
Let men glewe on us the name;
Suffyceth that we han the fame.

I GRAUNTE, quod she, by my trouthe!
Now, Eolus, withouten slouthe,
Tak out thy trumpe of gold, let see,
And blow as they han axed me,
That every man wene hem at ese,
Though they gon in ful badde lese.

This Eolus gan hit so blowe,
That through the world hit was yknowe.

THO com the seventh route anon,
And fel on knees everichoon,
And seyde: Lady, graunte us sone
The same thing, the same bone,
That ye this nexte folk han doon.

fy on yow, quod she, everichoon!
Ye masty swyn, ye ydel wrecches,
ful of roten slowe tecches!
What? false theves! wher ye wolde
Be famous good, and nothing nolde
Deserve why, ne never roughthe?
Men rather yow tohangen oughte!
for ye be lyk the sweynthe cat,
That wolde have fish; but wostow what?
He wolde nothing wete his clowes.
Yvel thrift come on your jowes,
And eek on myn, if I hit graunte,
Or do yow favour, yow to avaunte!
Thou Eolus, thou king of Trace!
Go, blow this folk a sory grace,
Quod she, anon; and wostow how?
As I shal telle thee right now;
Sey: These ben they that wolde honour
Have, and do noskinnes labour,
Ne do no good, and yit han laude;
And that men wende that bele Isaude
Ne coude hem noght of love werne;
And yit she that grint at a querne
Is al to good to ese hir herte.

THIS Eolus anon up sterte,
And with his blakke clarioun
He gan to blasen out a soun,
As loude as belweth wind in helle.
And eek therwith, the sooth to telle,
This soun was al so ful of japes,
As ever mowes were in apes.
And that wente al the world aboute,

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The Hous
of fame.
Liber III.



That every wight gan on hem shoute,
And for to laughe as they were wode;
Such game fonde they in hir hode.

WHO com another companye,
That had ydoon the traiterye,
The harm, the grettest wikkednesse
That any herte couthe gesse;
And preyed hir to han good fame,
And that she nolde hem doon no shame,
But yewe hem loos and good renoun,
And do hit blowe in clarioun.

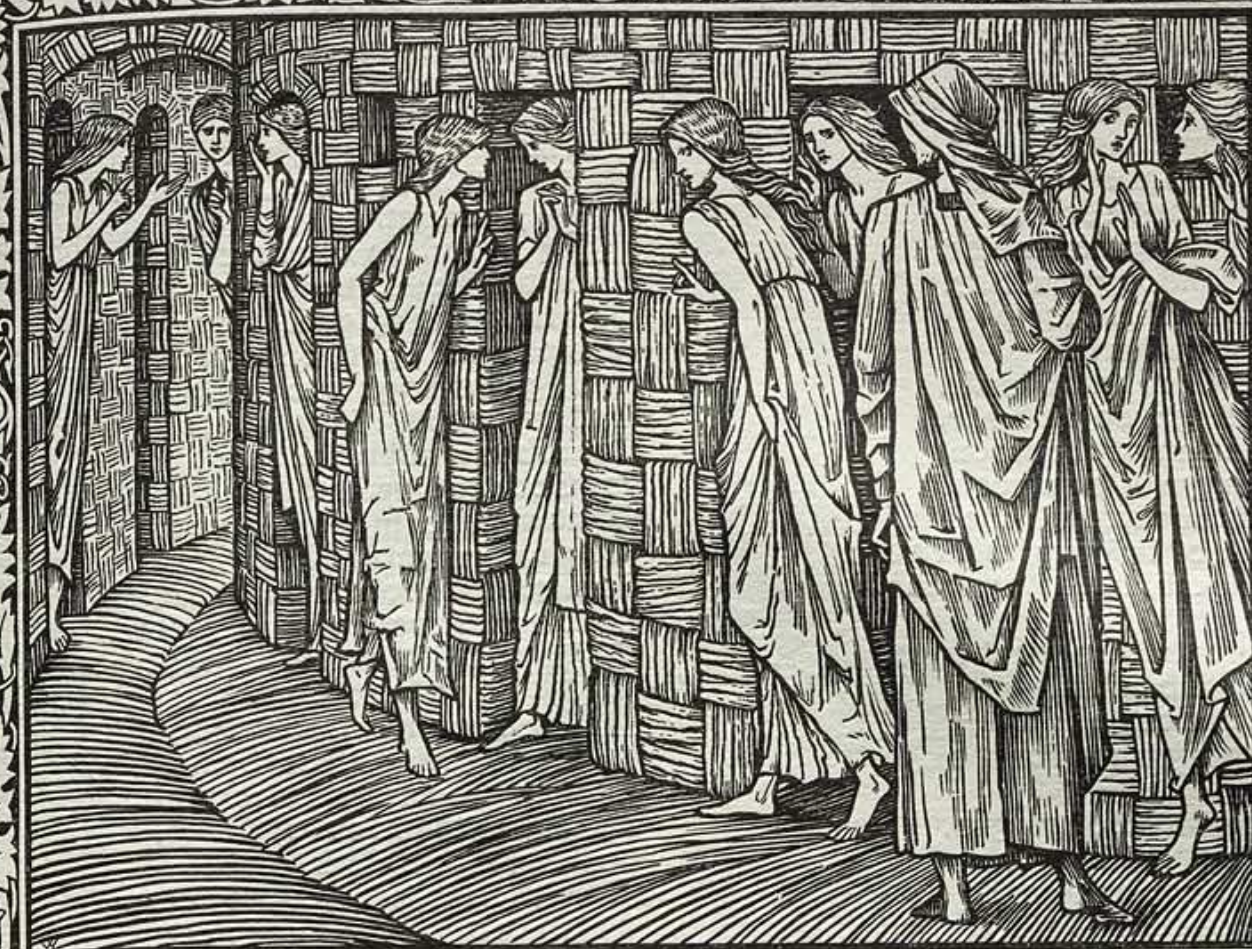
Nay, wis! quod she, hit were a vyce;
Al be ther in me no justyce,
Me listeth not to do hit now,
Ne this nil I not graunte yow.

WHO come ther lepinge in a route,
And gonne choppen al aboute
Every man upon the croune,
That al the halle gan to sounne,
And seyden: Lady, lefe and dere,
We ben swich folk as ye mowe here.
To tellen al the tale aright,
We ben shrewes, every wight,
And han delyt in wikkednes,
As gode folk han in goodnes;
And joye to be knownen shrewes,
And fulle of vyce and wikked thewes;

Wherfor we preyen yow, a rowe,
That our fame swich be knowe
In alle thing right as hit is.

GRANTE hit yow, quod she, ywis,
But what art thou that seyst this tale,
That werest on thy hose a pale,
And on thy tipet swiche a belle!
Madame, quod he, sooth to telle,
I am that like shrewe, ywis,
That brende the temple of Isidis
In Athenes, lo, that citee.

And wherfor didest thou so? quod she.
By my thrift, quod he, madame,
I wolde fayn han had a fame,
As other folk hadde in the toun,
Althogh they were of greet renoun
for hir vertu and for hir thewes;
Thoughte I, as greet a fame han shrewes,
Thogh hit be but for shrewednesse,
As gode folk han for goodnesse;
And sith I may not have that oon,
That oither nil I noght forgoon.
And for to gette of fames hyre,
The temple sette I al afyre.
Now do our loos be blowen swythe,
As wisty be thou ever blythe.
Gladly, quod she; thou Colus,



herestow not what they preyen us?

Madame, yis, ful wel, quod he,
And I wil trumpen hit, pardee!
And tok his blakke trumpe faste,
And gan to puffen and to blaste,
Til hit was at the worldes ende.

WITH that I gan aboute wende;
for oon that stood right at my bak,
Me thoughte, goodly to me spak,
And seyde: frend, what is thy name?

Artow come hider to han fame?
Nay, forsothe, frend! quod I;
I cam noght hider, graunt mercy!
for no swich cause, by my heed!
Sufficeth me, as I were deed,
That no wight have my name in honde.
I woot myself best how I stonde;
for what I drye or what I thinke,
I wol myselfen al hit drinke,
Certeyn, for the more part,
As ferforth as I can myn art.
But what dost thou here than? quod he.
Quod I: That wol I tellen thee,
The cause why I stonde here:
Som newe tydings for to lere:
Som newe thynges, I not what,
Tydings, other this or that,

Of love, or swiche thynges glade,
for certeynly, he that me made
To comen hider, seyde me,
I shulde bothe here and see,
In this place, wonder thynges;
But these be no swiche tydings
As I mene of. No? quod he.

And I answerde: No, pardee!
for wel I wiste, ever yit,
Sith that first I hadde wit,
That som folk han desyred fame
Dyversly, and loos, and name;
But certeynly, I niste how
Ne wher that fame dwelte, er now;
Ne eek of hir descripcioun,
Ne also hir condicioun,
Ne the ordre of hir dome,
Unto the tyme I hider come.
Whiche be, lo, these tydings,
That thou now thus hider bringes,
That thou hast herd? quod he to me;
But now, no fors; for wel I see
What thou desyrest for to lere.
Com forth, and stond no longer here,
And I wol thee, withouten drede,
In swich another place lede,
Ther thou shalt here many oon.

HO gan I forth with him to goon
Out of the castel, soth to seye.
Tho saugh I stonde in a valeye,
Under the castel, faste by,
An hous, that domus Dedali,
That Laborintus cleped is,
Nas maad so queynteliche ywrought.
And evermo, so swift as thought,
This queynte hous aboute wente,
That nevermo hit stille stente.
And therout com so greet a noise,
That, had hit stonden upon Oise,
Men mighte hit han herd esely
To Rome, I trowe sikerly.
And the noyse which that I herde,
for al the world right so hit ferde,
As doth the routing of the stoon
That from thengyn is leten goon.

AND al this hous, of whiche I rede,
Was made of twigges, falwe, rede,
And grene eek, and som weren
whyte,
Swiche as men to these cages thwyte,
Or maken of these paniers,
Or elles hottes or dossers;
That, for the swough and for the
twigges,
This hous was also ful of gigges,
And also ful eek of chirkinges,
And of many other werkinges;
And eek this hous bath of entrees
As fele as leves been on trees
In somer, when they grene been;
And on the roof men may yit seen
A thousand holes, and wel mo,
To leten wel the soun out go.

AND by day, in every tyde,
Ben al the dores open wyde,
And by night, echoon, unshette;
Ne porter ther is non to lette
No maner tydings in to pace;
Ne never reste is in that place,
That hit nis fild ful of tydingses,
Other loude, or of whispringes;
And, over alle the houses angles,
Is ful of rouninges and of jangles
Of werre, of pees, of mariages,
Of reste, of labour of viages,
Of abood, of deeth, of lyfe,
Of love, of hate, acorde, of stryfe,
Of loos, of lore, and of winninges,
Of hele, of sekenesse, of bildinges,
Of faire windes, of tempestes,
Of qualme of folk, and eek of bestes;
Of dyvers transmutaciouns
Of estats, and eek of regiouns;
Of trust, of drede, of jelousye,
Of wit, of winninge, of folye;
Of plentee, and of greet famyne,
Of chepe, of derth, and of ruyne;
Of good or mis governement,
Of fyr, of dyvers accident.

AND lo, this hous, of whiche I wryte,
Siker be ye, hit nas not lyte;
for hit was sixty myle of lengthe;
Al was the timber of no strengthe,
Yet hit is founded to endure
Whyl that hit list to aventure,
That is the moder of tydinges,
As the see of welles and springes,
And hit was shapen lyk a cage.

ERTEES, quod I, in al myn age,
Ne saugh I swich a hous as this.
And as I wondred me, ywis,
Upon this hous, tho war was I
How that myn egle, faste by,
Was perched hye upon a stoon;
And I gan streighte to him goon
And seyde thus: I preye thee
That thou a whyl abyde me
for Goddes love, and let me seen
What wondres in this place been;
for yit, paraventure, I may lere
Som good theron, or sumwhat here
That leef me were, or that I wente.

PETER! that is myn entente,
Quod he to me; therfor I dwelle;
But certein, oon thing I thee telle,
That, but I bringe thee therinne,
Ne shalt thou never kunne ginne
To come into hit, out of doute,
So faste hit whirleth, lo, aboute.
But sith that Joves, of his grace,
As I have seyde, wol thee solace
fynally with swiche thinges,
Uncouth sightes and tydinges,
To passe with thyn hevynesse;
Suche routh the hath he of thy distresse,
That thou suffrest debonairly,
And most thyselfen utterly
Disesperat of alle blis,
Sith that fortune hath maad amis
The fruit of al thyn hertes reste
Languisshe and eek in point to breste,
That he, through his mighty meryte,
Wol do thee ese, al be hit lyte,
And yaf expres commaundement,
To whiche I am obedient,
To furthre thee with al my might,
And wise and teche thee aright
Wher thou maist most tydinges here;
Shaltow anon heer many oon lere.

AND this worde he, right anon,
Hente me up bitwene his toon,
And at a windowe in me broghte,
That in this hous was, as me thoghte,
And therewithal, me thoghte hit stente,
And nothing hit aboute wente,
And me sette in the flore adoun.
But which a congregacioun
Of folk, as I saugh rome aboute
Some within and some withoute,
Nas never seen, ne shal ben eft;
That, certes, in the world nis left
So many formed by Nature,

Ne deed so many a creature;
That wel unethe, in that place,
Hadde I oon foot/brede of space;
And every wight that I saugh there
Rouned ech in otheres ere
A newe tyding prevely,
Or elles tolde al openly
Right thus, and seyde: Nost not thou
That is betid, lo, late or now?
O, quod the other, tel me what;
And than he tolde him this and that,
And swoor therto that hit was sooth:

Thus hath he seyde, and Thus he dooth:
Thus shal hit be: Thus herde I seye:
That shal be found: That dar I leye:
That al the folk that is alyve
Ne han the cunning to discryve
The thinges that I herde there,
What aloude, and what in ere,
But al the wondermost was this:
Whan oon had herd a thing, ywis,
He com forth to another wight,
And gan him tellen, anon right,
The same that to him was told,
But gan somwhat for to eche
To this tyding in this speche
More than hit ever was.
And nat so sone departed nas
That he fro him, that he ne mette
With the thriddle; and, or he lette
Any stounde, he tolde him als;
Were the tyding sooth or fals,
Yit wolde he telle hit nathelees,
And evermo with more encrees
Than hit was erst. Thus north and southe
Went every word fro mouth to mouthe,
And that encreasing evermo,
As fyr is wont to quikke and go
from a sparke spronge amis,
Til al a citee brent up is.

AND, whan that was ful yspronge,
And woxen more on every tonge
Than ever hit was, hit wente anon
Up to a windowe, out to goon;
Or, but hit mighte out ther pace,
Hit gan out crepe at som crevace,
And fleigh forth faste for the nones.

AND somtyme saugh I tho, at ones,
A lesing and a sad soth/sawe,
That gonne of aventure drawe
Out at a windowe for to pace;
And, when they metten in that place,
They were archeeked bothe two,
And neither of hem moste out go;
for other so they gonne croude,
Til eche of hem gan cryen loude:
Lat me go first! Nay, but lat me!
And here I wol ensuren thee
With the nones that thou wolt do so,

That I shal never fro thee go,
But be thyn owne sworn brother!
We wil medle us ech with other,
That no man, be he never so wrothe,
Shal han that oon of two, but bothe
At ones, al beside his leve,
Come we a morwe or on eve,
Be we cryed or stille yrouned.
Thus saugh I fals and sooth compouned
Togeder fleo for oo tydinge.

THUS out at holes gonne wringe
Every tyding streight to fame;
And she gan yeven eche his name,
After hir disposicioun,
And yaf hem eek duracioun,
Some to were and wane sone,
As dooth the faire whyte mone,
And leet hem gon. Ther mighte I seen
Wenged wondres faste fleen,
Twenty thousand in a route,
As Solus hem blew aboute.

AND, Lord! this hous, in alle tymes,
Was ful of shipmen and pilgrymes,
With scrippes bretful of lesinges,
Entremedled with tydinges,
And eek alone by hemselve.
O, many a thousand tymes twelve
Saugh I eek of these pardoneres,
Curours, and eek messangeres,
With boistes crammed ful of lyes
As ever vessel was with lyes.
And as I altherfastest wente
Aboute, and dide al myn entente
Me for to pleye and for to lere,
And eek a tyding for to here,
That I had herd of som contree
That shal not now be told for me:
for hit no nede is, redely;
folk can singe hit bet than I;
for al mot out, other late or rathe,
Alle the sheves in the lathe:
I herde a gret noise withalle
In a corner of the halle,
Ther men of love tydings tolde,
And I gan thiderward beholde;
for I saugh renninge every wight,
As faste as that they hadden might;
And everich cryed: What thing is that?
And som seyde: I not never what.
And whan they were alle on an hepe,
Tho behinde gonne up lepe,
And clamben up on othere faste,
And up the nose on hye caste,
And troden faste on othere heles
And stampe, as men don after eles.

ATT laste I saugh a man,
Which that I nevene naught ne can;
But he semed for to be
A man of greet auctoritee . . .

Unfinished.



TROILUS AND CRISEYDE LIBER PRIMUS.

Incipit Liber Primus.



DOUBLE SORWE OF Troilus to tellen,
That was the king Priamus sone of Troye,
In lovinge, how his adventures fellen
fro wo to wele, and after out of joye,
My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye.
Thesiphone, thou help me for tendyte

Thise woful vers, that wepen as I wryte!
To thee clepe I, thou goddesse of torment,
Thou cruel furie, sorwing ever in peyne;
Help me, that am the sorwful instrument
That helpeth lovers, as I can, to pleyne!
for wel sit it, the sothe for to seyne,
A woful wight to han a dreery fere,
And, to a sorwful tale, a sory chere.
for I, that god of Loves servaunts serve,
Ne dar to Love, for myn unlyklinesse,
Dreyen for speed, al sholde I therfor sterve,
So fer am I fro his help in derknesse;
But natheles, if this may doon gladnesse
To any lover, and his cause awayle,
Have he my thank, and myn be this travayle!
But ye lovers, that bathen in gladnesse,
If any drope of pitee in yow be,
Remembreth yow on passed hevinesses
That ye han felt, and on the adversitee
Of othere folk, and thenketh how that ye
han felt that Love dorste yow displese;
Or ye han wonne him with to greet an ese.
And preyeth for hem that ben in the cas
Of Troilus, as ye may after here,



TROILUS AND CRISEYDE LIBER PRIMUS.

Incipit Liber Primus.

That love hem bringe in hevene to solas,
And eek for me preyeth to God so dere,
That I have might to shewe, in som manere,
Swich peyne and wo as Loves folk endure,
In Troilus unsely aventure.
And biddeth eek for hem that been despayred
In love, that never nil recovered be,
And eek for hem that falsly been aseyred
Thorugh wikked tonges, be it he or she;
Thus biddeth God, for his benignitee,
To graunte hem sone out of this world to pace,
That been despayred out of Loves grace.
And biddeth eek for hem that been at ese,
That God hem graunte ay good per-
severance,
And sende hem might hir ladies go to plesse,
That it to Love be worship and plesaunce.
for so hope I my soule best avaunce,
To preyre for hem that Loves servaunts be,
And wryte hir wo, and live in charitee.
And for to have of hem compassioun
As though I were hir owene brother dere.
Now herkeneth with a gode entencioun,
for now wol I gon streight to my matere,
In whiche ye may the double sorwes here

Of Troilus, in loving of Criseyde,
And how that she forsook him er she deyde.
This wel wist, how that the
Grekes stronge
In armes with a thousand
shippes wente
To Troyewardes, and the citee
longe
Assegeden neigh ten yeer er
they stente,
And, in diverse wyse and oon
entente,
The ravissching to wreken of
Eleyne,
By Paris doon, they wrought-
en al hir peyne.
Now sit it so, that in the toun
ther was
Dwellinge a lord of greet auc-
toritee,
A gret devyn that cleped was
Calkas,
That in science so expert was, that he
Knew wel that Troye sholde destroyed be,
By answeere of his god, that highte thus,
Daun Phebus or Apollo Delphicus.

So whan this Calkas knew by calculinge,
And eek by answer of this Appollo,
That Grekes sholden swich a peple bringe,
Thorugh which that Troye moste been fordo,
He caste anon out of the toun to go;
for wel wiste he, by sort, that Troye sholde
Destroyed been, ye, wolde whoso nolde.

for which, for to departen softly
Took purpos ful this forknowinge wyse,
And to the Grekes ost ful prively
He stal anon; and they, in curteys wyse,
Him deden bothe worship and servyse,
In trust that he hath conning hem to rede
In every peril which that is to drede.

The noyse up roos, whan it was first aspyed,
Thorugh al the toun, and generally was spoken,
That Calkas traytor fled was, and allyed
With hem of Grece; and casten to ben wroken
On him that falsly hadde his feith so broken;
And seyden, he and al his kin at ones
Ben worthy for to brennen, fel and bones.

Now hadde Calkas left, in this meschaunce,
Al unwist of this false and wikked dede,
His doughter, which that was in gret penaunce,
for of hir lyf she was ful sore in drede,
As she that niste what was best to rede;
for bothe a widowe was she, and allone
Of any freend, to whom she dorste hir mone.

Criseyde was this lady name aright;
As to my dome, in al Troyes citee
Nas noon so fair, for passing every wight
So aungellyk was hir natyf beautee,
That lyk a thing immortal semed she,
As doth an hevenish parfit creature,
That down were sent in scorning of nature.

This lady, which that alday herde at ere
Hir fadres shame, his falsnesse and tresoun,
Wel nigh out of hir wit for sorwe and fere,
In widewes habit large of samit broun,
On knees she fil biforn Ector adoun;
With pitous voys, and tendrely wepinge,
His mercy bad, hirselves excusinge.

Now was this Ector pitous of nature,
And saw that she was sorwfully bigoon,
And that she was so fair a creature;
Of his goodnesse he gladed hir anon,
And seyde: Lat your fadres tresoun goon
forth with mischaunce, and ye yourself, in joye,
Dwellethe with us, whyl you good list, in Troye.

And al thonour that men may doon yow have,
As ferforth as your fader dwelled here,
Ye shul han, and your body shal men save,
As fer as I may ought enquire or here.
And she him thonked with ful humble chere,
And ofter wolde, and it hadde ben his wille,
And took hir leve, and boon, and held hir stille.

And in hir hous she abood with swich meynce
As to hir honour nede was to holde;
And whyl she was dwellinge in that citee,
Kepte hir estat, and bothe of yonge and olde
ful wel beloved, and wel men of hir tolde.
But whether that she children hadde or noon,
I rede it nought; therfore I lete it goon.

The thinges fellen, as they doon of werre,
Bitwixen hem of Troye and Grekes ofte,
for som day boughten they of Troye it derre,
And eft the Grekes founden no thing softe
The folk of Troye; and thus fortune onlofte,
And under eft, gan hem to wheelen bothe
After hir cours, ay whyl they were wrothe.

But how this toun com to destruccioun
Ne falleth nought to purpos me to telle;
for it were here a long disgressioun
fro my matere, and yow to longe dwelle.
But the Troyane gestes, as they felle,
In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dytte,
Whoso that can, may rede hem as they wryte.

But though that Grekes hem of Troye shetten,
And hir citee bisegede al aboute,
Hir olde usage wolde they not letten,
As for to honour hir goddes ful devoute;
But aldermost in honour, out of doute,
They hadde a relik bight Palladion,
That was hir trist aboven everichon.

And so bifel, whan comen was the tyme
Of Hperil, whan clothed is the mede
With newe grene, of lusty Ver the pryme,
And swote smellen floures whyte and rede,
In sondry wyses shewed, as I rede,
The folk of Troye hir observaunces olde,
Palladiones feste for to holde.

And to the temple, in al hir beste wyse,
In general, ther wente many a wight,
To herkennen of Palladion the servyse;
And namely, so many a lusty knight,
So many a lady fresh and mayden bright,
ful wel arrayed, bothe moste and leste,
Ye, bothe for the seson and the feste.

Among these othere folk was Criseyde,
In widewes habite blak; but natheles,
Right as our firste lettre is now an A,
In beautee first so stood she, makelees;
Hir godly looking gladede al the prees.
Nas never seyn thing to ben preyed derre,
Nor under cloude blak so bright a sterre.

As was Criseyde, as folk seyde everichoon
That hir bihelden in hir blake wede;
And yet she stood ful lowe and stille alloon,
Biholden othere folk, in litel brede,
And neigh the dore, ay under shames drede,
Simple of atyr, and debonaire of chere,
With ful assured lokinge and manere.

This Troilus, as he was wont to gyde
His yonge knightes, ladde hem up and doun
In thilke large temple on every syde,
Biholding ay the ladies of the toun,
Now here, now there, for no devocioun
hadde he to noon, to reven him his reate,
But gan to preyse and lakken whom him leste.

And in his walk ful fast he gan to wayten
If knight or squyer of his companye
Gan for to syke, or lete his eyen bayten
On any woman that he coude aspye;
He wolde smyle, and holden it folye,
And seye him thus: God wot, she slepeth softe
for love of thee, whan thou tornest ful ofte!

I have herd told, pardieux, of your livinge,
Ye lovers, and your lewede observaunces,
Of which a labour folk han in winninge
Of love, and, in the keping, which doutaunces;
And whan your preye is lost, wo and penaunces;
O verrey foles! nyce and blinde be ye;
Ther nis not oon can war by other be.

And with that word he gan caste up the browe,
Ascaunces: Lo! is this nought wysly spoken?
At which the god of love gan loken rowe
Right for despyt, and shoop for to ben wroken;
He hidde anon his bowe nas nat broken;
for sodeynly he hit him at the fulle;
And yet as proud a pekok can he pulle.

O blinde world, O blinde entencioun!
How ofte falleth al the effect contraire
Of surquidrye and foul presumpcioun;
for caught is proud, and caught is debonaire.
This Troilus is clomben on the staire,
And litel weneth that he moot descenden.
But al day fayleth thing that foles wenden.

As proude Bayard ginneth for to skippe
Out of the wey, so priketh him his corn,
Til he a lash have of the longe whippe,
Than thenketh he: Though I prounce al biforn
first in the trays, ful fat and newe shorn,
Yet am I but an hors, and horses lawe
I moot endure, and with my feres drawe.

So ferde it by this fers and proude knight;
Though he a worthy kinges sone were,
And wende nothing hadde had swiche might
Ayens his wil that sholde his herte stere,
Yet with a look his herte wex afere,
That he, that now was most in pryde above,
Wex sodeynly most subget unto love.

forth ensample taketh of this man,
Ye wyse, proude, and worthy folkes alle,
To scornen Love, which that so sone can
The freedom of your hertes to him thralle;
for ever it was, and ever it shal bifalle,
That Love is he that alle thing may binde;
for may no man fordo the lawe of kinde.

That this be sooth, hath preved and doth yet;
for this trowe I ye knowen, alle or some,
Men reden not that folk han gretter wit
Than they that han be most with love ynome;
And strengest folk ben therwith overcome,
The worthiest and grettest of degree;
This was, and is, and yet men shal it see.

And trewelich it sit wel to be so;
for alderwysest han therwith ben plesed;
And they that han ben aldermost in wo,
With love han ben confortet most and esed;
And ofte it hath the cruel herte apesed,
And worthy folk maad worthier of name,
And causeth most to dreden vyce and shame.

Now sith it may not goodly be withstonde,
And is a thing so vertuous in kinde,
Refuseth not to Love for to be bonde,
Sin, as himselven list, he may yow binde.
The yerde is bet that bowen wole and winde
Than that that brest; and therfor I yow rede
To folwen him that so wel can yow lede.

But for to tellen forth in special
As of this kinges sone of which I tolde,
And leten other thing collateral,
Of him thenke I my tale for to holde,
Bothe of his joye, and of his cares colde;
And al his werk, as touching this matere,
for I it gan, I wil therto refere.

Withinne the temple he wente him forth pleyinge,
This Troilus, of every wight aboute,
On this lady and now on that lokinge,
Wherso she were of toun, or of withoute;
And upon cas bifel, that thorough a route
his eye perced, and so depe it wente,
Til on Criseyde it smoot, and ther it stente.

And sodeynly he wex therwith astoned,
And gan hire bet biholde in thrifty wyse:
O mercy, God! thoughte he, wher hastow woned,
That art so fair and goodly to devyse?
Therwith his herte gan to sprede and ryse,
And softe sighed, lest men mighte him here,
And caughte ayen his firste pleyinge chere.

She nas not with the leste of hir stature,
But alle hir limes so wel answeringe
Weren to womanhode, that creature
Was never lasse mannish in seminge.
And eek the pure wyse of here meninge
Shewede wel, that men might in hir gesse
honour, estat, and wommanly noblesse.

To Troilus right wonder wel withalle
Gan for to lyke hir meninge and hir chere,
Which somdel deynous was, for she leet falle
Hir look a lite aside, in swich manere,
Ascaunces: What! may I not stonden here?
And after that hir lokinge gan she lighte,
That never thoughte him seen so good a sighte.

And of hir look in him ther gan to quiken
So greet desir, and swich affeccioun,
That in his hertes botme gan to stiken
Of hir his fixe and depe impressioun:
And though he erst hadde poured up and down,
He was tho glad his hornes in to shrinke;
Annethe wiste he how to loke or winke.

Lo, he that leet himselfen so konninge,
And scorned hem that loves peynes dryen,
Was ful unwar that love hadde his dwellinge
Withinne the subtil streames of hir yen;
That sodeynly him thoughte he felte dyen,
Right with hir look, the spirit in his herte;
Blessed be love, that thus can folk convertel

She, this in blak, lykinge to Troilus,
Over alle thing he stood for to biholde;
Ne his desir, ne wherfor he stood thus,
He neither there made, ne worde tolde;
But from afer, his maner for to holde,
On other thing his look somtyme he caste,
And eft on hir, whyl that servyse laste.

And after this, not fullliche al awhaped,
Out of the temple al esiliche he wente,
Repenting him that he hadde ever yjaped
Of loves folk, lest fully the descende
Of scorn fille on himself; but, what he mente,
Lest it were wist on any maner syde,
His wo he gan dissimulen and hyde.

Whan he was fro the temple thus departed,
He streyght anon unto his paleys torneth,
Right with hir look thurgh/shoten and thurgh-
darted,
Al feyneth he in lust that he sojorneth;
And al his chere and speche also he borneth;
And ay, of loves servants every whyle,
Himself to wrye, at hem he gan to smyle.

And seyde: Lord, so ye live al in lest,
Ye loveres! for the conningest of yow,
That serveth most ententiflich and best,
Him tit as often harm therof as prow;
Your hyre is quit ayein, ye, God wot how!
Nought wel for wel, but scorn for good servyse;
In feith, your ordre is ruled in good wyse!

In noun/certein ben alle your observaunces,
But it a sely fewe poyntes be;
Ne nothing asketh so grete attendaunces
As doth your lay, and that knowe alle ye;
But that is not the worst, as mote I thee;
But, tolde I yow the worst poynt, I leve,
Al seyde I sooth, ye wolden at me greve!

But tak this, that ye loveres ofte eschuwe,
Or elles doon of good entencioun,
ful ofte thy lady wole it misconstrue,
And deme it harm in hir opinioun;
And yet if she, for other enchesoun,
Be wrooth, than shalt thou han a groyn anon:
Lord! wel is him that may be of yow oon!

But for al this, whan that he say his tyme,
He held his pees, non other bote him gayned;
for love bigan his fetheres so to lyme,
That wel unnethe unto his folk he feyned
That othere besye nedes him destrayned;
for wo was him, that what to doon he niste,
But bad his folk to goon wher that hem liste.

And whan that he in chaumbre was allone,
He down upon his beddes feet him sette,
And first he gan to syke, and eft to grone,
And thoughte ay on hir so, withouten lette,
That, as he sat and wook, his spirit mette
That he hir saw a temple, and al the wyse
Right of hir loke, and gan it newe avyse.

Thus gan he make a mirour of his minde,
In which he saugh al hoolly hir figure;
And that he wel coude in his herte finde,
It was to him a right good aventure
To love swich oon, and if he dide his cure
To serven hir, yet mighte he falle in grace,
Or elles, for oon of hir servants pace.

Imaginge that travaille nor grame
Ne mighte, for so goodly oon, be lorn
As she, ne him for his desir ne shame,
Al were it wist, but in prys and upborn
Of alle lovers wel more than biforn;
Thus argumented he in his ginninge,
ful unavysed of his wo cominge.

Thus took he purpos loves craft to suwe,
And thoughte he wolde werken prively,
first, to hyden his desir in muwe
from every wight yborn, al/outrely,
But he mighte ought recovered be therby;
Remembering him, that love to wyde yblowe
Yelt bittre fruyt, though swete seed be sowe.

And over al this, yet muchel more he thoughte
What for to speke, and what to holden inne,
And what to arten hir to love he soughte,
And on a song anon/right to biginne,
And gan loude on his sorwe for to winne;
for with good hope he gan fully assente
Crisseyde for to love, and nought repente.

And of his song nought only the sentence,
As writ myn autour called Lollius,
But pleyntly, save our tonges difference,
I dar wel sayn, in al that Troilus
seyde in his song; lo! every word right thus
As I shal seyn; and whoso list it here,
Lo! next this vers, he may it finden here.

Cantus Troili.

If no love is, O God, what fele I so?
And if love is, what thing and which
is he?
If love be good, from whennes comth
my wo?
If it be wikke, a wonder thinketh me,
Whenne every torment and adversitee

That cometh of him, may to me savory thinke;
for ay thurst I, the more that I it drinke.

And if that at myn owene lust I brenne,
fro whennes cometh my wailing and my pleynte?
If harme agree me, wherto pleyne I thenne?
I noot, ne why unwery that I feynte.
O quike deeth, o swete harm so queynte,
How may of thee in me swich quantitee,
But if that I consente that it be?

And if that I consente, I wrongfully
Compleyne, ywis; thus possed to and fro,
Alsterelees withinne a boot am I
Amid the see, bytwixen windes two,
That in contrarie stonden evermo.
Alas! what is this wonder maladye?
for hete of cold, for cold of hete, I dye.

And to the god of love thus seyde he
With pitous voys: O lord, now youre is
My spirit, which that oughte youre be.
Yow thanke I, lord, that han me brought to this;
But whether goddesse or womman, ywis,
She be, I noot, which that ye do me serve;
But as hir man I wole ay live and sterve.

Ye stonden in hire eyen mightily,
As in a place unto your vertu digne;
Wherfore, lord, if my servyse or I
May lyke yow, so beth to me benigne;
for myn estat royal here I resigne
Into hir hond, and with ful humble chere
Bicome hir man, as to my lady dere.

In him ne deynd sparen blood royal
The fyr of love, wherfro God me blesse,
Ne him forbar in no degree, for al
his vertu or his excellent prowesse;
But held him as his thral lowe in distresse,
And brende him so in sondry wyse ay newe,
That sixty tyme a day he loste his hewe.

So muche, day by day, his owene thought,
for lust to hir, gan quiken and encrese,
That every other charge he sette at nought;
forthy ful ofte, his hote fyr to cese,
To seen hir goodly look he gan to prese;
for therby to ben esed wel he wende,
And ay the ner he was, the more he brende.

for ay the ner the fyr, the hotter is,
This, trowe I, knoweth al this companye.
But were he fer or neer, I dar seye this,
By night or day, for wysdom or folye,
his herte, which that is his brestes ye,
Was ay on hir, that fairer was to sene
Than ever was Eleyne or Polixene.

Eek of the day ther passed nought an houre
That to himself a thousand tyme he seyde:
Good goodly, to whom serve I and laboure,
As I best can, now wolde God, Crisseyde,

Ye wolden on me rewe er that I deyde!
My dere herte, alas! myn hele and hewe
And lyf is lost, but ye wole on me rewe.

Alle othere dredes weren from him fledde,
Bothe of the assege and his savacioun;
Ne in him desyr noon othere fownes bredde
But arguments to this conclusioun,
That she on him wolde han compassioun,
And he to be hir man, whyl he may dure;
Lo, here his lyf, and from the deeth his cure!

The sharpe shoures felle of armes preve,
That Ector or his othere bretheren diden,
Ne made him only therfore ones meve;
And yet was he, wherso men wente or riden,
founde oon the best, and lengest tyme abiden
Ther peril was, and dide eek such travayle
In armes, that to thenke it was mervayle.

But for non hate he to the Grekes hadde,
Ne also for the rescous of the toun,
Ne made him thus in armes for to maddre,
But only, lo, for this conclusioun,
To lyken hir the bet for his renoun;
fro day to day in armes so he spedde,
That alle the Grekes as the deeth him dredde.

And fro this forth tho refte him love his sleep,
And made his mete his foo; and eek his sorwe
Gan multiplie, that, whoso toke keep,
It shewed in his hewe, bothe eve and morwe;
Therfor a tittle he gan him for to borwe
Of other syknesse, lest of him men wende
That the hote fyr of love him brende.

And seyde, he hadde a fever and ferde amis;
But how it was, certayn, can I not seye,
If that his lady understood not this,
Or feyned hir she niste, oon of the tweye;
But wel I rede that, by no maner weye,
Ne semed it as that she of him roughte,
Nor of his peyne, or whatsoever he thoughte.

But than fel to this Troilus such wo,
That he was wel neigh wood; for ay his drede
Was this, that she som wight had loved so,
That never of him she wolde have taken hede;
for whiche him thoughte he felte his herte bledde,
Ne of his wo ne dorste he not biginne
To tellen it, for al this world to winne.

But whanne he hadde a space fro his care,
Thus to himself ful ofte he gan to pleyne;
He sayde: O fool, now art thou in the snare,
That whilom japedest at loves peyne;
Now artow hent, now gnaw thyn owene cheyne;
Thou were ay wont eche lovere reprehende
Of thing fro which thou canst thee nat defende.

What wole now every lover seyn of thee,
If this be wist, but ever in thyn absence
Laughen in scorn, and seyn: Lo, ther gooth he,

That is the man of so gret sapience,
That held us lovers leest in reverence!
Now, thanked be God, he may goon in the daunce
Of hem that Love list feblly for to avaunce!

But, O thou woful Troilus, God wolde,
Sin thou most loven thurgh thy destinee,
That thou beset were on swich oon that sholde
Knowe al thy wo, al lakkede hir pitee:
But al so cold in love, towards thee,
Thy lady is, as frost in winter mone,
And thou fordoon, as snow in fyr is sone.

God wolde I were aryved in the port
Of deeth, to which my sorwe wil me lede!
H, Lord, to me it were a greet comfort;
Then were I quit of languissching in drede.
for by myn hidde sorwe yblowe on brede
I shal biyaped been a thousand tyme
More than that fool of whos folye men ryme.

But now help God, and ye, swete, for whom
I pleyne, ycaught, ye, never wight so faste!
O mercy, dere herte, and help me from
The deeth, for I, whyl that my lyf may laste,
More than myself wol love yow to my laste.
And with som freendly look gladeth me, swete,
Though never more thing ye me bihete!

Thise wordes and ful manye another to
He spak, and called ever in his compleynte
Hir name, for to tellen hir his wo,
Til neigh that he in salte teres dreynte.
Al was for nought, she herde nought his pleynte;
And whan that he bithoughte on that folye,
A thousand fold his wo gan multiplye.

Biwayling in his chambre thus allone,
A freend of his, that called was Pandare,
Com ones in unwar, and herde him grone,
And sey his freend in swich distresse and care:
Alas! quod he, who causeth al this fare?
O mercy, God! what unhap may this mene?
Han now thus sone Grekes maad yow lene?

Or hastow som remors of conscience,
And art now falle in som devocioun,
And waylest for thy sinne and thyn offence,
And hast for ferde caught attricioun?
God save hem that biseged han our toun,
And so can leye our jolyte on presse,
And bring our lusty folk to holinesse!

These wordes seyde he for the nones alle,
That with swich thing he mighte him angry maken,
And with an angre don his sorwe falle,
As for the tyme, and his corage awaken;
But wel he wiste, as fer as tonges spaken,
Ther nas a man of gretter hardinesse
Than he, ne more desired worthinesse.

What cas, quod Troilus, or what aventure
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Hath gyded thee to see my languissching,
That am refus of every creature?
But for the love of God, at my preyng,
Go henne away, for certes, my deyng
Wol thee disese, and I mot nedes deye;
Therfor go wey, ther is no more to seye.

But if thou wene I be thus syh for drede,
It is not so, and therfor scorne nought;
Ther is another thing I take of hede
Wel more than ought the Grekes han ywrought,
Which cause is of my deeth, for sorwe & thought,
But though that I now telle thee it ne leste,
Be thou nought wrooth, I hyde it for the beste.

This Pandare, that neigh malt for wo and
routhe,
ful often seyde: Alas! what may this be?
Now freend, quod he, if ever love or trouthe
hath been, or is, bitwixen thee and me,
Ne do thou never swiche a crueltee
To hyde fro thy freend so greet a care:
Mostow nought wel that it am I, Pandare?

I wole parten with thee al thy peyne,
If it be so I do thee no comfort,
As it is freendes right, sooth for to seyne,
To entreparten wo, as glad desport.
I have, and shal, for trewe or fals report,
In wrong and right loved thee al my lyve;
Hyd not thy wo fro me, but telle it blyve.

Chan gan this sorwful Troilus to syke,
And seyde him thus: God leve it be my beste
To telle it thee; for, sith it may thee lyke,
Yet wole I telle it, though myn herte breste;
And wel wot I thou mayst do me no reste.
But lest thou deme I truste not to thee,
Now herkne, freend, for thus it stant with me.

Love, ayeins the which whoso defendeth
Himselfen most, him alderlest awayleth,
With desespier so sorwfully me offendeth,
That streyght unto the deeth myn herte sayleth.
Therto desyr so brenningly me assayleth,
That to ben slayn it were a gretter joye
To me than king of Grece been and Troye!

Suffiseth this, my fulle freend Pandare,
That I have seyde, for now wostow my wo;
And for the love of God, my colde care
So hyd it wel, I telle it never to mo;
for harmes mighte folwen, mo than two,
If it were wist; but be thou in gladnesse,
And lat me sterve, unknowe, of my distresse.

Now hastow thus unkindly and longe
hid this fro me, thou fool? quod Pandarus;
Paraunter thou might after swich oon longe,
That myn avys anon may helpen us.

This were a wonder thing, quod Troilus,
Thou coudest never in love thyselfen wisse;
How devel maystow bringen me to blisse?

Ye, Troilus, now herke, quod Pandare,
Though I be nyce; it happeth ofte so,
That oon that exces doth ful yvele fare,
By good counseyl can kepe his freend therfro.
I have myself eek seyn a blind man go
Theras he fel that coude loke wyde;
A fool may eek a wys man ofte gyde.

A whetston is no kerving instrument,
And yet it maketh sharpe kerving/tolis.
And ther thou woot that I have ought miswent,
Eschewe thou that, for swich thing to thescole is;
Thus ofte wyse men ben war by folis.
If thou do so, thy wit is wel biwared;
By his contrarie is every thing declared.

for how might ever sweetnesse have be knowe
To him that never tasted bitternesse?
Ne no man may be inly glad, I trowe,
That never was in sorwe or som distresse;
Eek whyt by blak, by shame eek worthinesse,
Ech set by other, more for other semeth;
As men may see; and so the wyse it demeth.

Sith thus of two contraries is a lore,
I that have in love so ofte assayed
Grevances, oughte conne, and wel the more
Counsayllen thee of that thou art amayed.
Eek thee ne oughte nat ben yvel apayed,
Though I desyre with thee for to bere
Thyn hevy charge; it shal the lasse dere.

I woot wel that it fareth thus by me
As to thy brother Parys an herdesse,
Which that ycleped was Oenone,
Wrot in a compleynt of hir hevinesse:
Ye say the lettre that she wroot, I gesse?
Nay, never yet, ywis, quod Troilus.
Now, quod Pandare, herkne; it was thus:

Phebus, that first fond art of medicyne,
Quod she, and coude in every wightes care
Remede and reed, by herbes he knew fyne,
Yet to himself his conninge was ful bare;
for love hadde him so bounden in a snare,
Al for the daughter of the kinge Admete,
That al his craft ne coude his sorwe bete.

Right so fare I, unhappily for me;
I love oon best, and that me smerteth sore;
And yet, paraunter, can I rede thee,
And not myself; reprove me no more.
I have no cause, I woot wel, for to sore
As doth an hawk that listeth for to pleye,
But to thyn help yet somewhat can I seye.

And of o thing right siker maystow be,
That certayn, for to deyen in the peyne,
That I shal nevermo discoveren thee;
Ne, by my trouthe, I kepe nat restreyne
Thee fro thy love, though that it were Eleyne,
That is thy brotheres wyf, if ich it wiste;
Be what she be, and love hir as thee liste.

Therefore, as freend fullich in me assure,
And tel me plat what is thyn enchesoun,
And final cause of wo that ye endure;
for douteth nothing, myn entencioun
Nis nought to yow of reprehencioun
To speke as now, for no wight may bireve
A man to love, til that him list to leve.

And witeth wel, that bothe two ben vyces,
Mistrusten alle, or elles alle leve;
But wel I woot, the mene of it no vyce is,
for for to trusten sum wight is a preve
Of trouthe, and forthy wolde I fayn remeve
Thy wrong conceyte, & do thee som wight triste,
Thy wo to telle; and tel me, if thee liste.

The wyse seyth: To him that is allone,
for, and he falle, he hath noon help to ryse,
And sith thou hast a felawe, tel thy mone;
for this nis not, certeyn, the nexte wyse
To winnen love, as techen us the wyse,
To walwe and wepe as Niobe the quene,
Whos teres yet in marbel been ysene.

Lat be thy weping and thy drerinesse,
And lat us lissen wo with other speche;
So may thy woful tyme seme lesse.
Delyte not in wo thy wo to seche,
As doon thise foles that hir sorwes eche
With sorwe, whan they han misaventure,
And listen nought to seche hem other cure.

Men seyn: To wrecche is consolacioun
To have another felawe in his peyne,
That oughte wel ben our opinioun,
for, bothe thou and I, of love we pleyne;
So ful of sorwe am I, soth for to seyne,
That certeynly no more harde grace
May sitte on me, forwhy ther is no space.

If God wole thou art not agast of me,
Lest I wolde of thy lady thee bigyle,
Thow wost thyself whom that I love, pardee,
As I best can, gon sithen longe whyle.
And sith thou wost I do it for no wyle,
And sith I am he that thou tristest most,
Tel me sumwhat, sin al my wo thou wost.

Yet Troilus, for al this, no word seyde,
But longe he lay as stille as he ded were;
And after this with sykinge he abreyde,
And to Pandarus voys he lente his ere,
And up his eyen caste he, that in fere
Was Pandarus, lest that in frenesye
He sholde falle, or elles sone dye:

And cryde, Awake! ful wonderly and sharpe;
What? slombrestow as in a lytargye?
Or artow lyk an asse to the harpe,
That hereth soun, whan men the strenges pleye,
But in his minde of that no melodye
May sinken, him to glade, for that he
So dul is of his bestialitee?

And with that Pandare of his wordes stente;
But Troilus yet him no word answerde,
For why to telle nas not his entente
To never no man, for whom that he so ferde.
For it is seyde: Man maketh ofte a yerde
With which the maker is himself ybeten
In sondry maner, as thise wyse treten,

And namely, in his counseyl tellinge
That toucheth love that oughte be secree;
for of himself it wolde ynough outspringe,
But if that it the bet governed be.
Eek somtyme it is craft to seme flee
fro thing which in effect men hunte faste;
Al this gan Troilus in his herte caste.

But natheles, whan he had herd him crye
Awake! he gan to syke wonder sore,
And seyde: freend, though that I stille lye,
I am not deef; now pees, and cry no more;
for I have herd thy wordes and thy lore;
But suffre me my mischef to biwayle,
for thy proverbes may me nought avayle.

Nor other cure canstow noon for me.
Eek I nil not be cured, I wol deye;
What knowe I of the quene Niobe?
Lat be thyne olde ensamples, I thee preye.
No quod tho Pandarus, therfore I seye,
Swich is delyt of foles to biwepe
Bir wo, but seken bote they ne kepe.

Now knowe I that ther reson in thee fayleth.
But tel me, if I wiste what she were
for whom that thee al this misaunter ayleth,
Dorstestow that I tolde hir in hir ere
Thy wo, sith thou darst not thyself for fere,
And hir bisoughte on thee to han som routh?
Why, nay, quod he, by God and by my trouthe!

What? not as bisily, quod Pandarus,
As though myn owene lyf lay on this nede?
No, certes, brother, quod this Troilus.
And why? for that thou sholdest never
spede.
Wostow that wel? Ye, that is out of drede,
Quod Troilus, for al that ever ye conne,
She nil to noon swich wrecche as I be wonne.

Quod Pandarus: Allas! what may this be,
That thou despayred art thus causeles?
What? liveth not thy lady? benedicite!
How wostow so that thou art graceles?
Swich yvel is not alwey boteles.
Why, put not impossible thus thy cure,
Sin thing to come is ofte in aventure.

I graunte wel that thou endurest wo
As sharp as doth he, Ticius, in helle,
Whos stomak foules tyren evermo
That highte volturis, as bokes telle.
But I may not endure that thou dwelle
In so unskilful an opinioun
That of thy wo is no curacioun.

But ones niltow, for thy coward herte,
And for thyn ire and folish wilfulness,
for wantrust, tellen of thy sorwes smerte,
Ne to thyn owene help do bisinesse
As muche as speke a resoun more or lesse,
But lyst as he that list of nothing recche.
What womman coude love swich a wrecche?

What may she demen other of thy deeth,
If thou thus deye, and she not why it is,
But that for fere is yolden up thy breeth,
for Grekes han biseged us, ywis?
Lord, which a thank than shaltow han of this!
Thus wol she seyn, and al the toun at ones:
The wrecche is deed, the devel have his bones!

Thou mayst allone here wepe and crye and knele;
But, love a woman that she woot it nought,
And she wol quyte that thou shalt not fele;
Unknowe, unkist, and lost that is unsought.
What! many a man hath love ful dere ybought
Twenty winter that his lady wiste,
That never yet his lady mouth he kiste.

What? shulde he therfor fallen in despayr,
Or be recreant for his owene tene,
Or sleen himself, al be his lady fayr?
Nay, nay, but ever in oon be fresh and grene
To serve and love his dere hertes quene,
And thanke it is a guerdoun hir to serve
A thousandfold more than he can deserve.

And of that word took hede Troilus,
And thoughte anon what folye he was inne,
And how that sooth him seyde Pandarus,
That for to sleen himself mighte he not winne,
But bothe doon unmanhod and a sinne,
And of his deeth his lady nought to wyte;
for of his wo, God woot, she knew ful lyte.

And with that thought he gan ful sore syke,
And seyde: Allas! what is me best to do?
To whom Pandare answerde: If thee lyke,
The best is that thou telle me thy wo;
And have my trouthe, but thou it finde so,
I be thy bote, or that it be ful longe,
To pees do me drawe, and sithen honge!

Ye, so thou seyst, quod Troilus tho, allas!
But, God wot, it is not the rather so;
ful hard were it to helpen in this cas,
for wel finde I that fortune is my fo,
Ne alle the men that ryden conne or go
May of hir cruel wheel the harm withstonde;
for, as hir list, she pleyeth with free and bonde.

Quod Pandarus: Than blamestow fortune
for thou art wrooth, ye, now at erst I see;
Wostow nat wel that fortune is commune
To every maner wight in som degree?
And yet thou hast this comfort, lo, pardee!
That, as hir joyes moten overgoon,
So mote hir sorwes passen everichoon.

for if hir wheel stinte anything to torne,
Chan cesses she fortune anon to be;
Now, sith hir wheel by no wey may sojorne,
What wostow if hir mutabilitee
Right as thyselfen list, wol doon by thee,
Or that she be not fer fro thyn helpinge?
Paraunter, thou hast cause for to singe!

And therfor wostow what I thee beseeche?
Lat be thy wo and turning to the grounde;
for whoso list have helping of his leche,
To him bihoveth first unwrye his wounde.
To Cerberus in helle ay be I bounde,
Were it for my suster, al thy sorwe,
By my wil, she sholde al be thyn tomorwe.

Loke up, I seye, and tel me what she is
Anoon, that I may goon aboute thy nede;
knowe ich hir ought? for my love, tel me this;
Chan wolde I hopen rather for to spede.
Tho gan the veyne of Troilus to blede,
for he was hit, and wex al reed for shame;
A hal quod Pandare, here biggineth game!

And with that word he gan him for to shake,
And seyde: Cheef, thou shalt hir name telle.
But tho gan sely Troilus for to quake
As though men sholde han lad him into helle,
And seyde: Allas! of al my wo the welles,
Chan is my swete fo called Criseyde!
And wel nigh with the word for fere he deyde.

And whan that Pandare herde hir name nevne,
Lord, he was glad, and seyde: freend so dere,
Now fare aright, for Joves name in hevne,
Love hath biset thee wel, be of good chere;
for of good name and wysdom and manere
she hath ynough, and eek of gentillesse;
If she be fayr, thou wost thyself, I gesse.

Ne I never saw a more bountevous
Of hir estat, ne a gladder, ne of speche
A freendlier, ne a more gracious
for to do wel, ne lasse hadde nede to seche
What for to doon; and al this bet to eche,
In honour, to as fer as she may strecche,
A hinges herte semeth by hires a wrecche.

And forthy loke of good comfort thou be;
for certainly, the firste poynt is this
Of noble corage and wel ordeyne,
A man to have pees with himself, ywis;
So oughtest thou, for nought but good it is
To lowen wel, and in a worthy place;
Thee oughte not to clepe it hap, but grace.

And also thenk, and therwith glade thee,
That sith thy lady vertuous is al,
So folweth it that ther is som pitee
Amonges alle thise othere in general;
And forthy see that thou, in special,
Requere nought that is ayein hir name;
for vertue streccheth not himself to shame.

But wel is me that ever I was born,
That thou biset art in so good a place;
for by my trouthe, in love I dorste have sworn,
Thee sholde never han tid thus fayr a grace;
And wostow why? for thou were wont to chace
At love in scorn, and for despyt him calle
Seynt Idiot, lord of thise foles alle!

How often hastow maad thy nice japes,
And seyde, that loves servants everichone
Of nycetee ben verray Goddes apes;
And some wolde monche hir mete alone,
Ligging abedde, and make hem for to grone;
And som, thou seydest, hadde a blaunche fevere,
And preydest God he sholde never kevere!

And some of hem toke on hem, for the colde,
More than ynough, so seydestow ful ofte;
And some han feyned ofte tyme, and tolde
How that they wake, whan they slegen softe;
And thus they wolde han brought hemself alofte,
And natheles were under at the laste;
Thus seydestow, and japedest ful faste.

Yet seydestow, that, for the more part,
These lovers wolden speke in general,
And thoughten that it was a siker art,
for fayling, for to assayen overal.
Now may I jape of thee, if that I shal!
But natheles, though that I sholde deye,
That thou art noon of tho, that dorste I seye.

Now beet thy brest, and sey to god of love:
Thy grace, lord! for now I me repente
If I mis spak, for now myself I love.
Thus sey with al thyn herte in good entente.
Quod Troilus: A! lord! I me consente,
And pray to thee my japes thou foryive,
And I shal nevermore whyl I live.

Thow seyst wel, quod Pandare, & now I hope
That thou the goddes wraththe hast al apesed;
And sithen thou hast wepen many a drope,
And seyde swich thing wherwith thy god is plesed,
Now wolde never god but thou were esed;
And think wel, she of whom rist al thy wo
Hereafter may thy comfort been also.

for thilke ground, that bereth the wedes wikke,
Bereth eek thise holsom herbes, as ful ofte
Next the foule nettle, rough and thikke,
The rose waxeth swote and smothe and softe;
And next the valey is the hil alofte;
And next the derke night the glade morwe;
And also joye is next the fyn of sorwe.

Now loke that atempre be thy brydel,
And, for the beste, ay suffre to the tyde,
Or elles al our labour is on ydel;
He hasteth wel that wysly can abyde;
Be diligent, and trewe, and ay wel hyde,
Be lusty, free, persevere in thy servyse,
And al is wel, if thou werke in this wyse.

Troilus and
Crisseyde.
Liber I.

But he that parted is in every place
Is nowher hool, as writen clerkes wyse;
What wonder is, though swich oon have no grace?
Eek wostow how it fareth of som servyse?
As plaunte a tre or herbe, in sondry wyse,
And on the morwe pulle it up as blyve,
No wonder is, though it may never thryve.

And sith that god of love hath thee bistowed
In place digne unto thy worthinesse,
Stond faste, for to good port hastow rowed;
And of thyself, for any hevinesse,
Hope alwey wel; for, but if drerinesse
Or overhaste our bothe labour shende,
I hope of this to maken a good ende.

And wostow why I am the lasse afered
Of this matere with my nece trete?
for this have I herd seyde of wyse plered:
Was never man ne woman yet bigete
That was unapt to suffren loves hete
Celestial, or elles love of kinde,
forthy som grace I hope in hir to finde.

And for to speke of hir in special,
Hir beautee to bithinken and hir youthe,
It sit hir nought to be celestial
As yet, though that hir liste bothe and couthe;
But trewely, it sete hir wel right nouthe
A worthy knight to loven and cheryce,
And but she do, I holde it for a vyce.

Wherfore I am, and wol be, ay redy
To peyne me to do yow this servyse;
for bothe yow to plesse thus hope I
herafterward; for ye beth bothe wyse,
And conne it counseyl kepe in swich a wyse,
That no man shal the wyser of it be;
And so we may be gladed alle three.

And, by my trouthe, I have right now of thee
A good conceyt in my wit, as I gesse,
And what it is, I wol now that thou see.
I thenke, sith that love, of his goodnesse,
Hath thee converted out of wikkednesse,
That thou shalt be the beste post, I leve,
Of al his lay, and most his foos togreve.

Ensample why, see now these wyse clerkes,
That erren aldermost ayein a lawe,
And ben converted from hir wikked werkes
Thorugh grace of God, that list hem to him
drawe,
Than arn they folk that han most God in awe,
And strengest feythed been, I understonde,
And conne an errour alderbest withstonde.

Whan Troilus had herd Pandare assented
To been his help in loving of Crisseyde,
Wex of his wo, as who seyth, untormented,
But hotter wex his love, and thus he seyde,
With sobre chere, although his herte pleyde:
Now blisful Venus helpe, er that I sterve,
Of thee, Pandare, I may som thank deserve.

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But, dere frend, how shal myn wo ben lesse
Til this be doon? and goode, eek tel me this,
How wiltow seyn of me and my destresse?
Lest she be wrooth, this drede I most, ywis,
Or nil not here or trowen how it is.
Al this drede I, and eek for the manere
Of thee, hir eem, she nil no swich thing here.

Quod Pandarus: Thou hast a ful gret care
Lest that the cherl may falle out of the mone!
Why, Lord! I hate of thee thy nyce fare!
Why, entremete of that thou hast to done!
for Goddes love, I bidde thee a bone,
So lat me alone, and it shal be thy beste.
Why, freend, quod he, now do right as thee
leste.

But herke, Pandare, o word, for I nolde
That thou in me wendest so gret folye,
That to my lady I desiren sholde
That toucheth harm or any vilenye;
for dredelees, me were lever dye
Than she of me ought elles understode
But that, that mighte sounen into gode.

Tho lough this Pandare, & anon answerde:
And I thy borw? fy! no wight dooth but so;
I roughte nought though that she stode & herde
How that thou seyst; but farewel, I wol go.
Adieu! be glad! God spede us bothe two!
Yif me this labour and this besinesse,
And of my speed be thyn al that swetnesse.

Tho Troilus gan down on knees to falle,
And Pandare in his armes hente faste,
And seyde: Now, fy on the Grekes alle!
Yet, pardee, God shal helpe us at the laste;
And dredelees, if that my lyf may laste,
And God toforn, lo, som of hem shal smerte;
And yet me athinketh that this avaunt measterte!

And now, Pandare, I can no more seye,
But thou wys, thou wost, thou mayst, thou art all!
My lyf, my deeth, hool in thyn honde I leve;
Help now, quod he. Yis, by my trouthe, I shal.
God yelde thee, freend, and this in special,
Quod Troilus, that thou me recomaunde
To hir that to the deeth me may comaunde.

This Pandarus tho, desirous to serve
His fulle freend, than seyde in this manere:
farwel, and thenk I wol thy thank deserve;
Have here my trouthe, & that thou shalt wel here.
And wente his wey, thenking on this matere,
And how he best mighte hir besече of grace,
And finde a tyme therto, and a place.

for every wight that hath an hous to founde
Ne renneth nought the werk for to biginne
With rakel hond, but he wol byde a stounde,
And sende his hertes lyne out fro withinne
Alderfirst his purpos for to winne.
Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte,
And caste his werk ful wysly, or he wroughte.

But Troilus lay tho no lenger down,
But up anon upon his stede bay,
And in the feld he pleyde tho leoun;
And was that Greek that with him mette that day.
And in the toun his maner tho forth ay
So goodly was, and gat him so in grace,
That ech him lovede that loked on his face.

for he bicom the frendlyeste wight,
The gentileste, and eek the moste free,
The thriftieste and oon the beste knight,
That in his tyme was, or mighte be.

Dede were his japes and his crueltee,
His heighe port and his manere estraunge,
And ech of tho gan for a vertu chaunge.

Now lat us stinte of Troilus a stounde,
That fareth lyk a man that hurt is sore,
And is somdel of akinge of his wounde
Ylissed wel, but heled no del more:
And, as an esy pacient, the lore
Abit of him that gooth aboute his cure;
And thus he dryveth forth his aventure.

Explicit Liber Primus.

Troilus and
Crisseyde.
Liber I.

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TROILUS AND CRISEYDE. LIBER SECUNDUS.
Incipit prohemium Secundi Libri.



OF THESE BLAKE NAMES FOR TO
 sayle,
 O wind, O wind, the wedder ginneth clere;
 For in this see the boot hath swich travayle,
 Of my conning that unnethe I it stere:
 This see clepe I the tempestous matere

Of desespere that Troilus was inne;
 But now of hope the calendes biginne.

O lady myn, that called art Cleo,
 Thou be my speed fro this forth, & my muse,
 To ryme wel this book, til I have do;
 Me nedeth here noon other art to use.
 For why to every lover I me excuse,
 That of no sentement I this endyte,
 But out of Latin in my tonge it wryte.

Wherfore I nil have neither thank ne blame
 Of al this werk, but pray yow mekely,
 Disblameth me, if any word be lame,
 For as myn auctor seyde, so seye I.
 Eek though I speke of love unfelingly,
 No wonder is, for it nothing of newe is;
 A blind man can nat juggen wel in hewis.

Ye knowe eek, that in forme of speche is
 chaunge
 Withinne a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
 That hadden prys, now wonder nyce and
 straunge
 As thinketh hem; and yet they spake hem so.
 And spedde as wel in love as men now do;



Incipit Liber Secundus.

IN May, that moder is of
 monthes glade,
 That fresshe floures,
 blewe, and whyte, and
 rede,
 Ben quike agayn, that
 winter dede made,
 And ful of bawme is
 fletinge every mede;
 Whan Phebus doth his

brighte bemes sprede
 Right in the whyte Bole, it so bitidde
 As I shal singe, on Mayes day the thridde,

That Pandarus, for al his wyse speche,
 felte eek his part of loves shottes kene,
 That, coude he never so wel of loving preche,
 It made his hewe aday ful ofte grene;
 So shoop it, that him fil that day a tene
 In love, for which in wo to bedde he wente,
 And made, er it was day, ful many a wente.

The swatwe Proigne, with a sorwful lay,
 Whan morwe com, gan make hir weymentinge,
 Why she forshapen was; and ever lay
 Pandare abedde, half in a slomeringe,
 Til she so neigh him made hir chiteringe

Eek for to winne love in sondry ages,
 In sondry londes, sondry ben usages.

And forthy if it happe in any wyse,
 That here be any love in this place
 That herkeneth, as the story wol devyse,
 How Troilus com to his lady grace,
 And thenketh, so nolde I nat love purchace,
 Or wondreth on his speche and his doinge,
 Inoot; but it is me no wonderinge;

for every wight which that to Rome went,
 halt nat o path, or alwey o manere;
 Eek in some lond were al the gamen shent,
 If that they ferde in love as men don here,
 As thus, in open doing or in chere,
 In visitinge, in forme, or seyde hir sawes;
 forthy men seyn, ech contree hath his lawes.

Eek scarcely been ther in this place three
 That han in love seyde lyk and doon in al;
 for to thy purpos this may lyken thee,
 And thee right nought, yet al is seyde or shal;
 Eek some men grave in tree, som in stoon
 wal,

As it bitit; but sin I have begonne,
 Myn auctor shal I folwen, if I conne.

Explicit prohemium Secundi Libri.

How Tereus gan forth hir suster take,
That with the noyse of hir he gan awake;
And gan to calle, and dresse him up to ryse,
Remembringe him his erand was to done
from Troilus, and eek his greet emprise;
And caste and knew in good plyt was the mone
To doon viage, and took his wey ful sone
Unto his neces paleys ther bisyde;
Now Janus, god of entree, thou him gyde!

Whan he was come unto his neces place,
Wher is my lady? to hir folk seyde he;
And they him tolde; and he forth in gan pace,
And fond, two othere ladyes sete and she
Withinne a paved parlour; and they three
Herden a mayden reden hem the geste
Of the Sege of Thebes, whyl hem leste.

Quod Pandarus: Ma dame, God yow see,
With al your book and al the companye!
Ey, uncle myn, welcume ywis, quod she,
And up she roos, and by the hond in hys
She took him faste, and seyde: This night thryve,
To goode mote it turne, of yow I mette!
And with that word she doun on bench him sette.

Ye, nece, ye shal fare wel the bet,
If God wole, al this yeer, quod Pandarus;
But I am sory that I have yow let
To herkenen of your bookye preysen thus;
for Goddes love, what seith it? tel it us.
Is it of love? O, som good ye me lere!

Uncle, quod she, your maistresse is not here!
With that they gonnen laughe, and tho she seyde:
This romaunce is of Thebes, that we rede;
And we han herd how that king Laius deyde
Thurgh Edippus his sone, and al that dede;
And here we stenten at these lettres rede,
How the bisshop, as the book can telle,
Amphiorax, fil thurgh the ground to helle.

Quod Pandarus: Al this knowe I myselve,
And al the assege of Thebes and the care;
for herof been ther maked bokes twelve:
But lat be this, and tel me how ye fare;
Do wey your barbe, and shew your face bare;
Do wey your book, rys up, and lat us daunce,
And lat us don to May som observaunce.

Al! God forbede! quod she, be ye mad?
Is that a widwes lyf, so God you save?
By God, ye maken me right sore adrad,
Ye ben so wilde, it semeth as ye ravel!
It sete me wel bet ay in a cave
To bidde, and rede on holy seyntes lyves:
Lat maydens gon to daunce, and yonge wyves.

As ever thryve I, quod this Pandarus,
Yet coude I telle a thing to doon you pleye.
Now uncle dere, quod she, tel it us

for Goddes love; is than the assege awaye?
I am of Grekes so ferd that I deye.
Nay, nay, quod he, as ever mote I thryve!
It is a thing wel bet than swiche fyve.

Ye, holy God! quod she, what thing is that?
What? bet than swiche fyve? ey, nay, ywis!
for al this world ne can I reden what
It sholde been; som jape, I trowe, is this;
And but yourselven telle us what it is,
My wit is for to arede it al to lene;
As help me God, I noot nat what ye mene.

And I your borow, ne never shal, for me,
This thing be told to yow, as mote I thryve!
And why so, uncle myn? why so? quod she,
By God, quod he, that wole I telle as blyve;
for prouder womman were ther noon on lyve;
And ye it wiste, in al the toun of Troye;
I jape nought, as ever have I joye!

Tho gan she wondren more than biforn
A thousand fold, and doun hir eyen caste;
for never, sith the tyme that she was born,
To knowe thing desired she so faste;
And with a syk she seyde him at the laste:
Now, uncle myn, I nil yow nought displese,
Nor axen more, that may do yow disece.

So after this, with many wordes glade,
And frendly tales, and with mery chere,
Of this and that they pleyde, and gunnen wade
In many an unkouth glad and deep matere,
As frendes doon, whan they ben met yfere;
Til she gan axen him how Ector ferde,
That was the tounes wal and Grekes yerde.

Ful wel, I thanke it God, quod Pandarus,
Save in his arm he hath a litel wounde;
And eek his fresshe brother Troilus,
The wyse worthy Ector the secounde,
In whom that every vertu list abounde,
As alle trouthe and alle gentillesse,
Wysdom, honour, fredom, and worthinesse.

In good feith, eem, quod she, that lyketh me;
They faren wel, God save hem bothe two!
for trewely I holde it greet deyntee
A kinges sone in armes wel to do,
And been of good condicions therto;
for greet power and moral vertu here
Is selde yseye in o persone yfere.

In good feith, that is sooth, quod Pandarus;
But, by my trouthe, the king hath sones tweye,
That is to mene, Ector and Troilus,
That certainly, though that I sholde deye,
They been as voyde of vyces, dar I seye,
As any men that liveth under the sonne,
Hir might is wyde yknowe, and what they conne.

Of Ector nedeth it nought for to telle;
In al this world ther nis a bettre knight
Than he, that is of worthinesse welle;

And he wel more vertu hath than might.
This knoweth many a wys and worthy wight.
The same prys of Troilus I seye,
God help me so, I knowe not swiche tweye.

By God, quod she, of Ector that is sooth;
Of Troilus the same thing trowe I;
for dredelees, men tellen that he dooth
In armes day by day so worthily,
And bereth him here at boom so gentilly
To every wight, that al the prys hath he
Of hem that me were levest preysed be.

Ye sey right sooth, ywis, quod Pandarus;
for yesterday, whoso hadde with him been,
he might have wondred upon Troilus;
for never yet so thikke a swarm of been
Ne fleigh, as Grekes fro him gonne fleen;
And thorough the feld, in every wightes ere,
Ther nas no cry but: Troilus is there!

Now here, now there, he hunted hem so faste,
Ther nas but Grekes blood; and Troilus,
Now hem he hurte, and hem alle doun he caste;
Ay where he deeth, and sheld and lyf for us;
he was hir deeth, and sheld and lyf for us;
That as that day ther dorste noon withstonde,
Whyl that he held his bloody swerd in honde.

Therto he is the frendlieste man
Of grete estat, that ever I saw my lyve;
And wher him list, best felawshipe can
To suche as him thinketh able for to thryve.
And with that word tho Pandarus, as blyve,
he took his leve, and seyde: I wol go henne:
Nay, blame have I, myn uncle, quod she thenne.

What eyleth yow to be thus wery sone,
And namelich of wommen? wol ye so?
Nay, sitteth doun; by God, I have to done
With yow, to speke of wisdom er ye go.
And every wight that was aboute hem tho,
That herde that, gan fer away to stonde,
Whyl they two hadde al that hem liste in honde.

Whan that hir tale al brought was to an ende
Of hire estat and of hir governaunce,
Quod Pandarus: Now is it tyme I wende;
But yet, I seye, aryseth, lat us daunce,
And cast your widwes habit to mischaunce;
What list yow thus yourself to disfigure,
Sith yow is tid thus fair an aventure?

Al! wel bithought! for love of God, quod she,
Shal I not witen what ye mene of this?
No, this thing axeth layser, tho quod he,
And eek me wolde muche greve, ywis,
If I tolde, and ye it toke amis.
Yet were it bet my tonge for to stille
Than seye a sooth that were ayeins your wille.

for, nece, by the goddesse Minerve,
And Juppiter, that maketh the thonder ringe,
And by the blisful Venus that I serve,

Ye been the womman in this world livinge,
Withoute paramours, to my witinge,
That I best love, and lothest am to greve,
And that ye witen wel yourself, I leve.

Ywis, myn uncle, quod she, grant mercy;
Your freendship have I founden ever yit;
I am to no man holden trewely
So muche as yow, and have so litel quit;
And, with the grace of God, emforth my wit,
As in my gilt I shal you never offende;
And if I have er this, I wol amende.

But, for the love of God, I yow besече,
As ye ben he that I most love and triste,
Lat be to me your fremde maner speche,
And sey to me, your nece, what yow liste:
And with that word hir uncle anon hir kiste,
And seyde: Gladly, leve nece dere,
Tak it for good that I shal seye yow here.

With that she gan hir eyen doun to caste,
And Pandarus to coghe gan a lyte,
And seyde: Nece, alwey, lo! to the laste,
Howso it be that som men hem delyte
With subtil art hir tales for to endyte,
Yet for al that, in hir entencion,
Hir tale is al for som conclusioun.

And sithen thende is every tales strengthe,
And this matere is so bihovely,
What sholde I peynte or drawen it on lengthe
To yow, that been my freend so feithfully?
And with that word he gan right inwardly
Biholden hir, and loken on hir face,
And seyde: On suche a mirour goode grace!

Than thoughte he thus: If I my tale endyte
Ought hard, or make a proces any whyle,
She shal no savour han therin but lyte,
And trowe I wolde hir in my wil bigyle.
for tendre wittes wenen al be wyle
Theras they can nat pleyntly understonde;
forthy hir wit to serven wol I fonde:

And loked on hir in a besy wyse,
And she was war that he byheld hir so,
And seyde: Lord! so faste ye me avyse!
Sey ye me never er now? what sey ye, no?
Yes, yes, quod he, and bet wole er I go;
But, by my trouthe, I thoughte now if ye
Be fortunat, for now men shal it see.

for to every wight som goodly aventure
Som tyme is shape, if he it can receyven;
And if that he wol take of it no cure,
Whan that it cometh, but wilfully it weyven,
Lo, neither cas nor fortune him deceyven,
But right his verray slouth and wrecchednesse;
And swich a wight is for to blame, I gesse.

Good aventure, O bele nece, have ye
ful lightly founden, and ye conne it take;
And, for the love of God, and eek of me,

Cacche it anon, lest aventure slake.
What sholde I lenger proces of it make?
Yif me your hond, for in this world is noon,
If that you list, a wight so wel begoon.

And sith I speke of good entencion,
As I to yow have told wel herebiforn,
And love as wel your honour and renoun
As creature in al this world yborn;
By alle the othes that I have yow sworn,
And ye be wrooth therfore, or wene I lye,
Ne shal I never seen yow eft with ye.

Beth nought agast, ne quaketh nat; wherto?
Ne chaungeth nat for fere so your hewe;
For hardely, the werste of this is do;
And though my tale as now be to yow newe,
Yet trist alwey, ye shal me finde trewe;
And were it thing that me thoughte unsittinge,
To yow nolde I no swiche tales bringe.

Now, my good eem, for Goddes love, I preye,
Quod she, com of, and tel me what it is;
For bothe I am agast what ye wol seye,
And eek me longeth it to wite, ywis.
For whether it be wel or be amis,
Sei on, lat me not in this fere dwelle;
So wol I doon, now herkneth, I shal telle:

Now, nece myn, the kinges dere sone,
The goode, wyse, worthy, fresshe, and free,
Which alwey for to do wel is his wone,
The noble Troilus, so loveth thee,
That, bot ye helpe, it wol his bane be.
Lo, here is al, what sholde I more seye?
Doth what yow list, to make him live or deye.

But if ye lete him deye, I wol sterve;
Have her my trouthe, nece, I nil not lye;
Al sholde I with this knyf my throte kerve:
With that the teres braste out of his yen,
And seyde: If that ye doon us bothe dyen,
Thus gylteles, than have ye fished faire;
What mende ye, though that we bothe apeyre?

Allas! he which that is my lord so dere,
That trewe man, that noble gentil knight,
That nought desireth but your freendly chere,
I see him deye, ther he goth upright,
And hasteth him, with al his fulle might,
for to be slayn, if fortune wol assente;
Allas! that God yow swich a beautee sente!

If it be so that ye so cruel be,
That of his deeth yow liste nought to recche,
That is so trewe and worthy, as ye see,
No more than of a japere or a wrecche,
If ye be swich, your beautee may not strecche
To make amendes of so cruel a dede;
Avysement is good before the nede.

Worth the faire gemme vertulees!
Worth that herbe also that dooth no bote!
Worth that beautee that is routheles!
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Worth that wight that tret ech under fote!
And ye, that been of beautee crop and rote,
If therwithal in you ther be no routhe,
Than is it harm ye liven, by my trouthe!

And also thenk wel, that this is no gaudie;
for me were lever, thou and I and he
Were hanged, than I sholde been his baudie,
As heyghe, as men mighte on us alle ysee:
I am thyn eem, the shame were to me,
As wel as thee, if that I sholde assente,
Thorugh myn abet, that he thyn honour shente.

Now understond, for I yow nought requere
To binde yow to him thorugh no behestie,
But only that ye make him bettre chere
Than ye han doon er this, and more feste,
So that his lyf be saved, at the leste:
This al and som, and playnly our entente;
God helpe me so, I never other mente.

Lo, this request is not but skile, ywis,
Ne doute of reson, pardee, is ther noon.
I sette the worste that ye dreden this,
Men wolden wondren seen him come or goon:
And ther ayeins answer I thus anon,
That every wight, but he be fool of kinde,
Wol deme it love of freendship in his minde.

What? who wol deme, though he see a man
To temple go, that he the images eteth?
Thenk eek how wel and wysly that he can
Governe himself, that he nothing foryeteth,
That, wher he cometh, he prys and thank him
geteth;
And eek therto, he shal come here so selde,
What fors were it though al the toun behelde?

Swich love of freendes regneth al this toun;
And wrye yow in that mantel evermo;
And, God so wis be my savacioun,
As I have seyde, your beste is to do so.
But alwey, goode nece, to stinte his wo,
So lat your daunger sucred ben a lyte,
That of his deeth ye be nought for to wyte.

Criseyde, which that herde him in this wyse,
Thoughte: I shal fele what he meneth, ywis.
Now, eem, quod she, what wolde ye devyse,
What is your reed I sholde doon of this?
That is wel seyde, quod he, certayn, best is
That ye him love ayein for his lovinge,
As love for love is skilful guerdoninge.

Thenk eek, how elde wasteth every houre
In eche of yow a party of beautee;
And therfore, er that age thee devoure,
Go love, for, olde, ther wol no wight of thee.
Lat this proverbe a lore unto yow be;
To late ywar, quod Beautee, whan it paste;
And elde daunteth daunger at the laste.

The kinges fool is woned to cryen loude,
Whan that him thinketh a womman bereth hir hye,
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So longe mote ye live, and alle proude,
Til crowes feet be growe under your ye,
And sende yow thanne a mirour in to pryde
In whiche ye may see your face amorwe!
Neece, I bidde wisse ye no more sorwe.

With this he stente, and caste adoun the heed,
And she bigan to breste awepe anon.
And seyde: Allas, for wol why nere I deed?
for of this world the feith is al goon!
Allas! what sholden straunge to me doon,
Whan he, that for my beste freend I wende,
Ret me to love, and sholde it me defende?

Allas! I wolde han trusted, doutelees,
That if that I, thurgh my disaventure,
Had loved other him or Achilles,
Ector, or any mannes creature,
Ye nolde han had no mercy ne mesure
On me, but alwey had me in reprove;
This false world, alas! who may it leve?

What? is this al the joye and al the feste?
Is this your reed, is this my blisful cas?
Is this the verray mede of your behestie?
Is al this peynted proces seyde, alas!
Right for this fyn? O lady myn, Pallas!
Thou in this dredful cas for me purveye;
for so astonied am I that I deye!

With that she gan ful sorwfully to syke;
Al may it be no bet? quod Pandarus;
By God, I shal no more com here this wyke,
And God toform, that am mistrusted thus;
I see ful wel that ye sette lyte of us,
Or of our deeth! Allas! I wolful wrecche!
Mighte he yet live, of me is nought to recche.

O cruel God, O dispitouse Marte,
O furies three of helle, on yow I crye!
So lat me never out of this hous departe,
If that I mente harm or vilanye!
But sith I see my lord mot nedes dye,
And I with him, here I me shryve, and seye
That wikkedly ye doon us bothe deye.

But sith it lyketh yow that I be deed,
By Neptunus, that god is of the see,
fro this forth shal I never eten breed
Til I myn owene herte blood may see;
for certayn, I wole deye as sone as he.
And up he sterte, and on his wey he raughte,
Til she agayn him by the lappe caughte.

Criseyde, which that wel neigh starf for fere,
So as she was the ferfulleste wight
That mighte be, and herde eek with hir ere,
And saw the sorwful ernest of the knight,
And in his preyere eek saw noon unright,
And for the harm that mighte eek fallen more,
She gan to rewe, and dradde hir wonder sore;

And thoughte thus: Unhappes fallen thikke
Alday for love, and in swich maner cas,
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As men ben cruel in hemself and wikke;
And if this man slee here himself, alas!
In my presence, it wol be no solas.
What men wolde of hit deme I can nat seye;
It nedeth me ful sleily for to pleye.

And with a sorwful syk she seyde thrye:
Al! Lord! what me is tid a sory chaunce!
for myn estat now lyth in jupartye,
And eek myn emes lyf lyth in balaunce;
But nathelees, with Goddes governaunce,
I shal so doon, myn honour shal I kepe,
And eek his lyf, and stinte for to wepe.

Of harmes two, the lesse is for to chese;
Yet have I lever maken him good chere
In honour, than myn emes lyf to lese;
Ye seyn, ye nothing elles me requere?
No, wis, quod he, myn owene nece dere.
Now wel, quod she, and I wol doon my peyne;
I shal myn herte ayeins my lust constreyne,

But that I nil not holden him in bonde,
Ne love a man, ne can I not, ne may
Ayeins my wil; but elles wol I fonde,
Myn honour sauf, plesse him fro day to day;
Therto nolde I nought ones have seyde nay,
But that I dredde, as in my fantasie;
But cesse cause, ay cesseth maladye.

And here I make a protestacioun,
That in this proces if ye depper go,
That certaynly, for no savacioun
Of yow, though that ye sterve bothe two,
Though al the world on o day be my fo,
Ne shal I never on him han other routhe.
I graunte wel, quod Pandarus, by my trouthe.

But may I truste wel therto, quod he,
That, of this thing that ye han hight me here,
Ye wol it holden trewly unto me?
Ye, doutelees, quod she, myn uncle dere.
Ne that I shal han cause in this matere,
Quod he, to pleyne, or after yow to preche?
Why, no, pardee; what nedeth more speche?

Tho fillen they in othere tales glade,
Til at the laste: O good eem, quod she tho,
for love of God, which that us bothe made,
Tel me how first ye wisten of his wo:
Wot noon of hit but ye? He seyde, No.
Can he wel speke of love? quod she, I preye,
Tel me, for I the bet me shal purveye.

Tho Pandarus a litel gan to smyle,
And seyde: By my trouthe, I shal yow telle.
This other day, nought gon ful longe whyle,
Inwith the paleys gardyn, by a welle,
Can he and I wel half a day to dwelle,
Right for to speken of an ordenaunce,
How we the Grekes mighte disavaunce.

Sone after that bigonne we to lepe,
And casten with our dartes to and fro,
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Til at the laste he seyde, he wolde slepe,
And on the gres adoun he leyde him tho;
And I after gan rome to and fro
Til that I herde, as that I welk alone,
How he bigan ful wofully to grone.

Tho gan I stalke him softly bihinde,
And sikerly, the sothe for to seyne,
As I can clepe ayein now to my minde,
Right thus to Love he gan him for to pleyne;
He seyde: Lord! have routhe upon my peyne,
Al have I been rebel in myn entente;
Now, mea culpa, lord! I me repente.

O god, that at thy disposicioun
Ledest the fyn, by juste purveyaunce,
Of every wight, my lowe confessioun
Accepte in gree, and send me swich penaunce
As lyketh thee, but from desesperaunce,
That may my goost departe away fro thee,
Thou be my sheld, for thy benignitee.

For certes, lord, so sore hath she me wounded
That stod in blak, with loking of hir yen,
That to myn hertes botme it is ysounded,
Thorough which I woot that I mot nedes dyen;
This is the worste, I dar me not biwryen;
And wel the hotter been the gledes rede,
That men hem wryen with asschen pale & dede.

With that he smoot his heed adoun anon,
And gan to motre, I noot what, trewely.
And I with that gan stille away to goon,
And leet therof as nothing wist hadde I,
And sette here adoun and stood him by,
And seyde: Awake, ye slepen al to longe;
It semeth nat that love dooth yow longe,

That slepen so that no man may yow wake.
Who sey ever or this so dul a man?
Ye, freend, quod he, do ye your hedes ake
For love, and lat me liven as I can.
But though that he for wo was pale and wan,
Yet made he tho as fresh a contaunce,
As though he shulde have led the newe daunce.

This passed forth, til now, this other day,
It fel that I com roming al alone
Into his chaumbre, and fond how that he lay
Upon his bed; but man so sore grone
Ne herde I never, and what that was his mone,
Ne wiste I nought; for, as I was cominge,
Al sodeynly he lefte his compleynge.

Of which I took somewhat suspicioun,
And neer I com, and fond he wepte sore;
And God so wis be my savacioun,
As never of thing hadde I no routhe more.
For neither with engyn, ne with no lore,
Unethes mighte I fro the deeth him kepe;
That yet fele I myn herte for him wepe.

And God wot, never, sith that I was born,
Was I so bisy no man for to preche,
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Ne never was to wight so depe ysworn,
Or he me tolde who mighte been his leche,
But now to yow rehersen al his speche,
Or alle his woful wordes for to sounne,
Ne bid me not, but ye wol see me swowne.

But for to save his lyf, and elles nought,
And to non harm of yow, thus am I driven;
And for the love of God that us hath wrought,
Swich chere him dooth, that he and I may liven.
Now have I plat to yow myn herte schryven;
And sin ye woot that myn entente is clene,
Tak hede therof, for I non yvel mene.

And right good thrift, I pray to God, have ye,
That han swich oon ycaught withoute net;
And be ye wys, as ye ben fair to see,
Wel in the ring than is the ruby set.
Ther were never two so wel ymet,
Whan ye ben his al hool, as he is youre;
Ther mighty God yet graunte us see that hour!

Nay, therof spak I not, a, ha! quod she,
As helpe me God, ye shenden every deell!
O mercy, dere nece, anon quod he,
Whatso I spak, I mente nought but weel.
By Mars the god, that helmed is of steel;
Now beth nought wrooth, my blood, my nece dere,
Now wel, quod she, foryeven be it here!

With this he took his leve, and hoom he wente;
And Lord, how he was glad and wel bigoon!
Crisseyde aroos, no lenger she ne stente,
But straught into his closet wente anon,
And sette here adoun as stille as any stoon,
And every word gan up and down to winde,
That he hadde seyde, as it com hir to minde;

And wex somdel astonied in hir thought,
Right for the newe cas; but whan that she
Was ful avysed, tho fond she right nought
Of peril, why she oughte afered be.
For man may love, of possibilitee,
A womman so, his herte may tobestre,
And she nought love ayein, but if hir leste.

But as she sat alone and thoughte thus,
Chascery aroos at skarmish al withoute,
And men cryde in the strete: See, Troilus
Hath right now put to flight the Grekes route!
With that gan al hir meynee for to shoute:
Al go we see, caste up the latis wyde;
For thurgh this strete he moot to palays ryde;

For other wey is fro the yate noon
Of Dardanus, ther open is the cheyne.
With that com he and al his folk anon
An esy pas rydinge, in routes tweyne,
Right as his happy day was, sooth to seyne,
For which, men say, may nought disturbed be
That shal bityden of necessitee.

This Troilus sat on his baye stede,
Al armed, save his heed, ful richely,

And wounded was his hors, and gan to blede,
On which he rood a pas, ful softly;
But swich a knightly sighte, trewely,
As was on him, was nought, withouten faile,
To loke on Mars, that god is of batayle.

So lyk a man of armes and a knight
He was to seen, fulfild of heigh prowessse;
For bothe he hadde a body and a might
To doon that thing, as wel as hardinesse;
And eek to seen him in his gere him dresse,
So fresh, so yong, so weldy semed he,
It was an heven upon him for to see.

His helm tohewen was in twenty places,
That by a tissew heng, his bak bihinde,
His sheld todasshed was with swerdes & maces,
In which men mighte many an arwe finde
That thirled hadde horn and nerf and rinde;
And ay the peple cryde: Here cometh our joye,
And, next his brother, holdere up of Troye!

For which he wex a litel reed for shame,
Whan he the peple upon him herde cryen,
That to biholde it was a noble game,
How sobrelieche he caste down his yen.
Crisseyda gan al his chere aspyen,
And leet so soft it in hir herte sinke,
That to hirself she seyde: Who yaf me drinke?

For of hir owene thought she wex al reed,
Remembringe hir right thus: Lo, this is he
Which that myn uncle swereth he moot be deed,
But I on him have mercy and pitee;
And with that thought, for pure ashamed, she
Gan in hir heed to pulle, and that as faste,
Whyl he and al the peple forby paste,

And gan to caste and rollen up and doun
Withinne hir thought his excellent prowessse,
And his estat, and also his renoun,
His wit, his shap, and eek his gentillesse;
But most hir favour was, for his distresse
Was al for hir, and thoughte it was a routhe
To sleen swich oon, if that he mente trouthe.

Now mighte som envyous jangle thus:
This was a sodeyn love, how mighte it be
That she so lightly lovede Troilus
Right for the firste sighte; ye, pardee?
Now whoso seyth so, mote he never thee!
For every thing, a ginning hath it nede
Eal be wrought, withouten any drede.

For I sey nought that she so sodeynly
Yaf him hir love, but that she gan enclyne
To lyke him first, and I have told yow why;
And after that, his manhod and his pyne
Made love withinne hir herte for to myne,
For which, by proces and by good servyse,
He gat hir love, and in no sodeyn wyse.

And also blisful Venus, wel arayed,
Sat in hir seventhe house of hevene tho,

Disposed wel, and with aspectes payed,
To helpen sely Troilus of his wo.
And, sooth to seyn, she nas nat al a fo
To Troilus in his nativitee;
God woot that wel the soner spedde he.

Now lat us stinte of Troilus a throwe,
That rydeth forth, and lat us tourne faste
Unto Crisseyde, that heng hir heed ful lowe,
Theras she sat alone, and gan to caste
Wheron she wolde apoynte hir at the laste,
If it so were hir eem he wolde cesse,
For Troilus, upon hir for to presse.

And, Lord! so she gan in hir thought argue
In this matere of which I have yow told,
And what to doon best were, and what eschue,
That plyted she ful ofte in many fold.
Now was hir herte warm, now was it cold,
And what she thoughte somewhat shal I wryte,
As to myn auctor listeth for to endyte.

She thoughte wel, that Troilus persone
She knew by sighte and eek his gentillesse,
And thus she seyde: Al were it nought to done,
To graunte him love, yet, for his worthinesse,
It were honour, with pley and with gladnesse,
In honestee, with swich a lord to dele,
For myn estat, and also for his hele.

Eek, wel wot I my kinges sone is he;
And sith he hath to see me swich delyt,
If I wolde utterly his sighte flee,
Paraunter he mighte have me in dispyt,
Thurgh which I mighte stonde in worse plyt;
Now were I wys, me hate to purchace,
Withouten nede, ther I may stonde in grace?

In every thing, I woot, ther lyth mesure,
For though a man forbode dronkenesse,
He nought forbet that every creature
Be drinkelees for alwey, as I gesse;
Eek sith I woot for me is his distresse,
I ne oughte not for that thing him despyse,
Sith it is so, he meneth in good wyse.

And eek I knowe, of longe tyme agoon,
His thewes goode, and that he is not nyce.
Ne avauntour, seyth men, certein, is he noon;
To wys is he to do so gret a vyce;
Ne als I nel him never so cheryce,
That he may make avaunt, by juste cause;
He shal me never binde in swiche a clause.

Now set a cas, the hardest is, ywis,
Men mighten deme that he loveth me:
What dishonour were it unto me, this?
May I him lette of that? why nay, pardee!
I knowe also, and alday here and see,
Men loven wommen al this toun aboute;
Be they the wers? why, nay, withouten doute.

I think eek how he able is for to have
Of al this noble toun the thriftieste,

To been his love, so she hir honour save;
for out and out he is the worthieste,
Save only Ector, which that is the beste.
And yet his lyf al lyth now in my cure,
But swich is love, and eek myn aventure.

Ne me to love, a wonder is it nought;
for wel wot I myself, so God me spede,
Al wolde I that noon wiste of this thought,
I am oon the fayreste, out of drede,
And goodlieste, whoso taketh hede;
And so men seyn in al the toun of Troye.
What wonder is it though he of me have joye?

I am myn owene woman, wel at ese,
I thank it God, as after myn estat;
Right yong, and stonde untreyd in lusty lese,
Withouthen jalousey or swich debat;
Shal noon housbonde seyn to me, Chekmat!
for either they ben ful of jalousey,
Or maisterful, or loven noveltrye.

What shal I doon? to what fyn live I thus?
Shal I nat loven, in cas if that me leste?
What, par dieux! I am nought religious!
And though that I myn herte sette at reste
Upon this knight, that is the worthieste,
And kepe alwey myn honour and my name,
By alle right, it may do me no shame.

But right as whan the sonne shyneth brighte,
In March, that chaungeth ofte tyme his face,
And that a cloud is put with wind to flighte
Which oversprat the sonne as for a space,
A cloudy thought gan thorough hir soule pace,
That overspradde hir brighte thoughtes alle,
So that for fere almost she gan to falle.

That thought was this: Alas! sin I am free,
Sholde I now love, and putte in jupartye
My sikernes, and thralen libertee?
Alas! how dorste I thenken that folye?
May I nought wel in other folk aspye
Hir dredful joye, hir constreynt, and hir payne?
Ther loveth noon, that she nath why to pleyne.

for love is yet the moste stormy lyf,
Right of himself, that ever was bigonne;
for ever som mistrust, or nyce stryf,
Ther is in love, som cloud is over the sonne:
Therto we wretched women nothing conne,
Whan us is wo, but wepe and sitte and thinke;
Our wreche is this, our owene wo to drinke.

Also these wikked tonges been so prest
To speke us harm, eek men be so untrew, e,
That, right anon as cessed is hir lest,
So cesseth love, and forth to love a newe:
But harm ydoon, is doon, whoso it rewe,
for though these men for love hem first torede,
ful sharp beginning breketh ofte at ende.

How ofte tyme hath it yknownen be,
The treson, that to womman hath be do?

To what fyn is swich love, I can nat see,
Or wher bicomth it, whan it is ago;
Ther is no wight that woot, I trowe so,
Wher it bycomth; lo, no wight on it spometh;
That erst was nothing, into nought it torneth.

How bisy, if I love, eek moste I be
To plesen hem that jangle of love, and demen,
And coye hem, that they sey non harm of me;
for though ther be no cause, yet hem semen
Al be for harm that folk hir freendes quemen;
And who may stoppen every wikked tonge,
Or soun of belles whyl that they be ronge?

And after that, hir thought bigan to clere,
And seyde: He which that nothing undertaketh,
Nothing ne acheveth, be him looth or dere.
And with an other thought hir herte quaketh;
Than slepeth hope, and after dred awaketh;
Now hoot, now cold; but thus, bitwixen tweye,
She rist hir up, and went hir for to pleye.

Adoun the steyre anon right tho she wente
Into the gardin, with hir neces thre,
And up and doun ther made many a wente,
flexippe, she, Charbe, and Antigone,
To pleyen, that it joye was to see;
And othere of hir women, a gret route,
Hir folwede in the gardin aboute.

This yerd was large, and rayled alle the aleyes,
And shadwed wel with bloomy bowes grene,
And benched newe, and soded alle the weyes,
In which she walketh arm in arm bitwene;
Til at the laste Antigone the shene
Gan on a Troian song to singe clere,
That it an heven was hir voys to here.

She seyde: O love, to whom I have and shal
Ben humble subgit, trewe in myn entente,
As I best can, to yow, lord, yewe ich al
for evermore, myn hertes lust to rente,
for never yet thy grace no wight sente
So blisful cause as me, my lyf to lede
In alle joye and seurtee, out of drede.

Ye, blisful god, han me so wel beset
In love, ywis, that al that bereth lyf
Imaginen ne cowde how to ben bet;
for, lord, withouthen jalousey or stryf,
I love oon which that is most ententyf
To serven wel, unwery or unfeyned,
That ever was, and leest with harm distreyned.

As he that is the welle of worthinesse,
Of trouthe ground, mirour of goodliheed,
Of wit Appollo, stoon of sikernes,
Of vertu rote, of lust findere and heed,
Thurgh which is alle sorwe fro me deed,
Ywis, I love him best, so doth he me;
Now good thrift have he, wherso that he be!

Whom sholde I thanke but yow, god of love,
Of al this blisse, in which to bathe I ginne?

And thanked be ye, lord, for that I love!
This is the righte lyf that I am inne,
To flemen alle manere vyce and sinne:
This doth me so to vertu for to entende,
That day by day I in my wil amende.

And whoso seyth that for to love is vyce,
Or thraldom, though he fele in it distresse,
He outhir is envyous, or right nyce,
Or is unmyghty, for his shrewednesse,
To loven; for swich maner folk, I gesse,
Defamen love, as nothing of him knowe;
They speken, but they bente never his bowe.

What is the sonne wers, of kinde righte,
Though that a man, for feblesse of his yen,
May nought endure on it to see for brighte?
Or love the wers, though wrecches on it cryen?
No wele is worth, that may no sorwe dryen.
And forthy, who that hath an heed of verre,
fro cast of stonnes war him in the werre!

But I with al myn herte and al my might,
As I have seyde, wol love, unto my laste,
My dere herte, and al myn owene knight,
In which myn herte growen is so faste,
And his in me, that it shal ever laste.
Al dredde I first to love him to biginne,
Now woot I wel, ther is no peril inne.

And of hir song right with that word she
stente,
And therewithal: Now, nece, quod Criseyde,
Who made this song with so good entente?
Antigone answerde anon, and seyde:
Ma dame, ywis, the goodlieste mayde
Of gret estat in al the toun of Troye;
And let hir lyf in most honour and joye.

Forsothe, so it semeth by hir song,
Quod tho Criseyde, and gan therwith to syke,
And seyde: Lord, is there swich blisse among
These lovers, as they conne faire endyte?
Ye, wis, quod fresh Antigone the whyte,
for alle the folk that han or been on lyve
Ne conne wel the blisse of love discryve.

But wene ye that every wrecche woot
The parfit blisse of love? why, nay, ywis;
They wenen al be love, if oon be hoot;
Do wey, do wey, they woot nothing of this!
Men mosten axe at seyntes if it is
Aught fair in hevne; why? for they conne telle;
And axen fendes, is it foul in helle.

Criseyde unto that purpos nought answerde,
But seyde: Ywis, it wol be night as faste.
But every word which that she of hir herde,
She gan to prenten in hir herte faste;
And ay gan love hir lasse for to agaste
Than it dide erst, and sinken in hir herte,
That she wex somewhat able to converte.

The dayes honour, and the hevnes ye,

The nightes fo, al this clepe I the sonne,
Gan westren faste, and downward for to wrye,
As he that hadde his dayes cours yronne;
And whyte thinges wexen dimme and donne
for lak of light, and sterres for to appere,
That she and al hir folk in wente yfere.

So whan it lyked hir to goon to reste,
And voyded weren they that voyden oughte,
She seyde, that to slepe wel hir leste.
Hir women sone til hir bed hir broughte.
Whan al was hust, than lay she stille, & thoughte
Of al this thing the manere and the wyse.
Reherce it nedeth nought, for ye ben wyse.

A nightingale, upon a cedre grene,
Under the chambre wal ther as she lay,
ful loude sang ayein the mone shene,
Paraunter, in his briddes wyse, a lay
Of love, that made hir herte fresh and gay.
That herked she so longe in good entente,
Til at the laste the dede sleep hir hente.

And, as she sleep, anon right tho hir mette,
How that an egle, fethered whyt as boon,
Under hir brest his longe clawes sette,
And out hir herte herente, and that anon,
And dide his herte into hir brest to goon,
Of which she nought agroos ne nothing smerte,
And forth he fleigh, with herte left for herte.

Now lat hir slepe, and we our tales holde
Of Troilus, that is to paleys riden,
fro the searmuch, of the whiche I tolde,
And in his chambre sit, and hath abiden
Til two or thre of his messages yeden
for Pandarus, and soughten him ful faste,
Til they him founde, & broughte him at the laste.

This Pandarus com leping in at ones
And seide thus: Who hath ben wel ybete
Today with swerdes, and with slinger stones,
But Troilus, that hath caught him an hete?
And gan to jape, and seyde: Lord, so ye swete!
But rys, and lat us soupe and go to reste;
And he answerde him: Do we as thee leste.

With al the haste goodly that they mighte,
They spedde hem fro the souper unto bedde;
And every wight out at the dore him dighte,
And wher him list upon his wey he spedde;
But Troilus, that thoughte his herte bledde
for wo, til that he herde som tydinge,
He seyde: freend, shal I now wepe or singe?

Quod Pandarus: Ly stille, and lat me slepe,
And don thyn hood, thy nedes spedde be;
And chese, if thou wolt singe or daunce or lepe;
At shorte wordes, thow shalt trowe me.
Sire, my nece wol do wel by thee,
And love thee best, by God and by my trouthe,
But lak of pursuit make it in thy slouthe.

for thus ferforth I have thy work bigonne,
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fro day to day, til this day, by the morwe,
hir love of freendship have I to thee wonne,
And also hath she leyd hir feyth to borwe.
Algate a foot is hameled of thy sorwe.
What sholde I lenger sermon of it holde?
As ye han herd bifore, al he him tolde.

But right as floures, thorough the colde of night
Yclosed, stoupen on hir stalkes lowe,
Redressen hem ayein the sonne bright,
And spreden on hir kinde cours by rowe;
Right so gan tho his eyen up to throwe
This Troilus, and seyde: O Venus dere,
Thy might, thy grace, yheried be it here!

And to Pandare he held up bothe his bondes,
And seyde: Lord, al thyn be that I have;
for I am hool, al brosten been my bondes;
A thousand Troians who so that me yave,
Esche after other, God so wis me save,
Ne mighte me so gladen; lo, myn herte,
It spredeth so for joye, it wol tosteret!

But Lord, how shal I doon, how shal I liven?
Whan shal I next my dere herte see?
How shal this longe tyme away be driven,
Til that thou be ayein at hir fro me?
Thou mayst answer, Abyd, abyd, but he
That hangeth by the nekke, sooth to seyne,
In grete disease abydeþ for the peyne.

Al esily, now, for the love of Marte,
Quod Pandarus, for every thing hath tyme;
So longe abyd til that the night departe;
for al so siker as thou lyst here by me,
And God toform, I wol be there at pryme,
And for thy werk somewhat as I shal seye,
Or on som other wight this charge leye.

for pardee, God wot, I have ever yit
Ben redy thee to serve, and to this night
Have I nought fayned, but emforth my wit
Don al thy lust, and shal with al my might.
Do now as I shal seye, and fare aright;
And if thou nilt, wyte al thyself thy care,
On me is nought along thyn yvel fare.

I woot wel that thou wyser art than I,
A thousand fold, but if I were as thou,
God helpe me so, as I wolde outrely,
Right of myn owene hond, wryte hir right now
A lettre, in which I wolde hir tellen how
I ferde amis, and hir besече of routhe;
Now help thyself, and leve it not for slouth.

And I myself shal therwith to hir goon;
And whan thou wost that I am with hir there,
Worth thou upon a courser right anon,
Ye, hardily, right in thy beste gere,
And ryd forth by the place, as nought ne were,
And thou shalt finde us, if I may, sittinge
At som windowe, into the strete lokinge.

And if thee list, than maystow us saluwe,
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And upon me make thy contenance;
But, by thy lyf, be war and faste eschuwe
To tarien ought, God shilde us fro mischaunce!
Ryd forth thy wey, and hold thy governaunce;
And we shal speke of thee somwhat, I trowe,
Whan thou art goon, to do thyne eres glowe!

Touching thy lettre, thou art wys ynough,
I woot thou nilt it digneliche endyte;
As make it with thise argumentes tough;
Ne scrivenish or craftily thou it wryte;
Beblotte it with thy teres eek a lyte;
And if thou wryte a goodly word al softe,
Though it be good, reherce it not to ofte.

for though the beste harpoun upon tyne
Wolde on the beste souned joly harpe
That ever was, with alle his fingres fyve,
Touche ay o streng, or ay o werbul harpe,
Were his nayles poynted never so sharpe,
It shulde maken every wight to dulle,
To here his glewe, and of his strokes fulle.

Ne jompre eek no discordaunt thing yfere,
As thus, to usen termes of phisyk;
In loves termes, hold of thy matere
The forme alwey, and do that it be lyk;
for if a peyntour wolde peynte a pyh
With asses feet, and hede it as an ape,
It cordeth nought; so nere it but a jape.

This counseyl lyked wel to Troilus;
But, as a dreedful lover, he seyde this:
Atlas, my dere brother Pandarus,
I am ashamed for to wryte, ywis,
Lest of myn innocence I seyde amis,
Or that she nolde it for despyt receyve;
Thanne were I deed, ther mighte it nothing weyve.

To that Pandare answerde: If thee lest,
Do that I seye, and lat me therwith goon;
for by that Lord that formed est and west,
I hope of it to bringe answer anon
Right of hir hond, and if that thou nilt noon,
Lat be; and sory mote be been his lyve,
Ayeins thy lust that helpeth thee to thryve.

Quod Troilus: Depardieux, I assente;
Sin that thee list, I will aryse and wryte;
And blisful God preye ich, with good entente,
The vyage, and the lettre I shal endyte,
So spede it; and thou, Minerva, the whyte,
Yif thou me wit my lettre to devyse:
And sette him down, and wroot right in this wyse.

first he gan hir his righte lady calle,
His hertes lyf, his lust, his sorwes leche,
His blisse, and eek this othere termes alle,
That in swich cas these lovers alle seche;
And in ful humble wyse, as in his speche,
He gan him recomaunde unto hir grace;
To telle al how, it axeth muchel space.

And after this, ful lowly he hir prayde
To be nought wrooth, though he, of his folye,
So hardy was to hir to wryte, and seyde,
That love it made, or elles moste he dye,
And pitously gan mercy for to crye;
And after that he seyde, and ley ful loude,
Himself was litel worth, and lesse he coude;

And that she sholde han his conning excused,
That litel was, and eek he dreedde hir so,
And his unworthinesse he ay accused;
And after that, than gan he telle his wo;
But that was endeles, withouten ho;
And seyde, he wolde in trouthe alwey him holde;
And radde it over, and gan the lettre folde.

And with his salte teres gan he bathe
The ruby in his signet, and it sette
Upon the wax deliverliche and rathe;
Therwith a thousand tymes, er he lette,
He histe tho the lettre that he shette,
And seyde: Lettre, a blisful destinee
Thee shapen is, my lady shal thee see.

This Pandare took the lettre, and that by tyme
Amorwe, and to his neeces paleys sterte,
And faste he swoor, that that was passed pryme,
And gan to jape, and seyde: Ywis, myn herte,
So fresh it is, although it sore smerte,
I may not slepe never a Mayes morwe;
I have a joly wo, a lusty sorwe.

Criseyde, whan that she hir uncle herde,
With dreedful herte, and desirous to here
The cause of his cominge, thus answerde:
Now by your feyth, myn uncle, quod she, dere,
What maner windes gydeth yow now here?
Tel us your joly wo and your penaunce,
How ferforth be ye put in loves daunce.

By God, quod he, I hoppe alwey bihinde!
And she to laughe, it thoughte hir herte breste.
Quod Pandarus: Loke alwey that ye finde
Game in myn hood, but herkneth, if yow leste;
Ther is right now come into tounne a geste,
A Greek espye, and telleth newe thinges,
for which come I to telle yow tydinges.

Into the gardin go we, and we shal here,
Al prevely, of this a long sermoun.
With that they wenten arm in arm yfere
Into the gardin from the chaumbre down.
And whan that he so fer was that the soun
Of that he speke, no man here mighte,
He seyde hir thus, and out the lettre plighte:

Lo, he that is al hoolly youre free
Him recomaundeth lowly to your grace,
And sent to you this lettre here by me;
Avyseth you on it, whan ye han space,
And of som goodly answer yow purchase;
Or, helpe me God, so pleynty for to seyne,
He may not longe liven for his peyne.

Ful dreedfully tho gan she stonde stille,
And took it nought, but at hir humble chere
Gan for to chaunge, and seyde: Serit ne bille,
for love of God, that toucheth swich matere,
Ne bring me noon; and also, uncle dere,
To myn estat have more reward, I preye,
Than to his lust; what sholde I more seye?

And loketh now if this be resonable,
And letteth nought, for favour ne for slouth,
To seyn a sooth; now were it covenable
To myn estat, by God, and by your trouthe,
To taken it, or to han of him routhe,
In harming of myself or in repreve?
Ber it ayein, for him that ye on leve!

This Pandarus gan on hir for to stare,
And seyde: Now is this the grettest wonder
That ever I sey! lat be this nyce fare!
To deethe mote I smiten be with thonder,
If, for the citee which that stondeþ yonder,
Wolde I a lettre unto yow bringe or take
To harm of yow; what list yow thus it make?

But thus ye faren, wel neigh alle and some,
That he that most desireth yow to serve,
Of him ye recche leest wher he bcome,
And whether that he live or elles sterve.
But for al that that ever I may deserve,
Refuse it nought, quod he, and hente hir faste,
And in hir bosom the lettre doun he thraste,

And seyde hir: Now cast it away anon,
That folk may seen and gauren on us tweye.
Quod she: I can abyde til they be goon.
And gan to smyle, and seyde him: Sem, I preye,
Swich answer as yow list yourself purveye,
for trewely I nil no lettre wryte.
No? than wol I, quod he, so ye endyte.

Therwith she lough, and seyde: Go we dyne.
And he gan at himself to jape faste,
And seyde: Nece, I have so greet a pyne
for love, that every other day I faste;
And gan his beste japes forth to caste;
And made hir so to laughe at his folye,
That she for laughter wende for to dye.

And whan that she was comen into halle:
Now, eem, quod she, we wol go dyne anon;
And gan some of hir women to hir calle,
And streyght into hir chaumbre gan she goon;
But of hir businesses, this was oon
Amonges othere thinges, out of drede,
ful prively this lettre for to rede;

Avysed word by word in every tyne,
And fond no lak, she thoughte he coude good;
And up it putte, and went hir in to dyne.
And Pandarus, that in a study stood,
Er he was war, she took him by the hood,
And seyde: Ye were caught er that ye wiste;
I vouche sauf, quod he, do what yow liste.
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¶ Tho wesshen they, and sette hem doun & ete;
And after noon ful slely Pandarus
Gan drawe him to the window next the strete,
And seyde: Nece, who hath arayed thus
The yonder hous, that stant aforweyn us?
¶ Which hous? quod she, and gan for to biholde,
And knew it wel, and whos it was him tolde,

And fillen forth in speche of thinges smale,
And seten in the window bothe tweye.
¶ Whan Pandarus saw tyme unto his tale,
And saw wel that hir folk were alle aweye:
Now, nece myn, tel on, quod he, I seye,
How lyketh yow the lettre that ye woot?
Can he thereon? for, by my trouthe, I noot.

¶ Therwith al rosy hewed tho wex she,
And gan to humme, and seyde: So I trowe.
¶ Hquyte him wel, for Goddes love, quod he;
Myself to medes wol the lettre sowe,
And held his bondes up, and sat on knowe,
Now, goode nece, be it never so lyte,
Yif me the labour, it to sowe and plyte.

¶ Ye, for I can so wryte, quod she tho;
And eek I noot what I sholde to him seye.
¶ Nay, nece, quod Pandare, sey not so;
Yet at the leste thanketh him, I preye,
Of his good wil, and doth him not to deye.
Now for the love of me, my nece dere,
Refuseth not at this tyme my preyere.

¶ Depar, dieux, quod she, God leve al be wel!
God helpe me so, this is the firste lettre
That ever I wroot, ye, al or any del.
¶ And into a closet, for to ayse hir bettre,
She wente alone, and gan hir herte unfettre
Out of disdaynes prison but a lyte;
And sette hir doun, and gan a lettre wryte,

Of which to telle in short is myn entente
Cheffect, as fer as I can understonde:
She thonked him of al that he wel mente
Towardes hir, but holden him in bonde
She nolde nought, ne make herselven bonde
In love, but as his suster, him to plesse,
She wolde fayn, to doon his herte an ese.

She shette it, and to Pandarus gan goon,
There as he sat and loked into strete,
And doun she sette hir by him on a stoon
Of jaspere, upon a quissshin gold ybete,
And seyde: As wisly helpe me God the grete,
I never dide a thing with more peyne
Than wryte this, to which ye me constreyne;

¶ And took it him: he thonked hir and seyde:
God woot, of thing ful ofte looth bigonne
Cometh ende good; and nece myn, Criseyde,
That ye to him of hard now ben ywonne
Oughte he be glad, by God and yonder sonne!
for why men seyth: Impressiounes lighte
ful lightly been ay redy to the flighte.

But ye han pleyed tyraunt neigh to longe,
And hard was it your herte for to grave;
Now stint, that ye no longer on it honge,
Al wolde ye the forme of daunger save.
But hasteth yow to doon him joye have;
for trusteth wel, to longe ydoon hardnesse
Caused despyt ful often, for distresse.

¶ And right as they declamed this matere,
Lo, Troilus, right at the stretes ende,
Com ryding with his tenthe some yfere,
Al softly, and thiderward gan bende
Theras they sete, as was his way to wende
To paleys ward; and Pandare him aspyde,
And seyde: Nece, ysee who cometh here ryde!

O flee not in, he seeth us, I suppose;
Lest he may thinke that ye him eschuwe.
¶ Nay, nay, quod she, and wex as reed as rose.
¶ With that he gan hir humbly to saluwe,
With dredful chere, and ofte his hewes muwe;
And up his look debonairly he caste,
And bekked on Pandare, and forth he paste.

God woot if he sat on his hors a right,
Or goodly was beseyn, that ilke day!
God woot wher he was lyk a manly knight!
¶ What sholde I drecche, or telle of his aray?
Criseyde, which that alle these thinges say,
To telle in short, hir lyked al yfere,
His persone, his aray, his look, his chere,

His goodly manere and his gentillesse,
So wel, that never, sith that she was born,
Ne hadde she swich routhe of his distresse;
And howso she hath hard ben herbiform,
To God hope I, she hath now caught a thorn.
She shal not pulle it out this nexte wyke;
God sende mo swich thornes on to pyke!

Pandare, which that stood hir faste by,
felte iren hoot, and he bigan to smyte,
And seyde: Nece, I pray yow hertely,
Tel me that I shal axen yow a lyte.
A womman, that were of his deeth to wyte,
Withouten his gilt, but for hir lakked routhe,
Were it wel doon? ¶ Quod she: Nay, by my trouthe!

¶ God helpe me so, quod he, ye sey me sooth,
Ye felen wel yourself that I not lye;
Lo, yond he rit! ¶ Quod she: Ye, so he dooth.
¶ Wel, quod Pandare, as I have told yow thrye,
Lat be your nyce shame and your folye,
And spek with him in esing of his herte;
Lat nyceete not do yow bothe smerte.

¶ But theron was to heven and to done;
Considered al thing, it may not be;
And why, for shame; and it were eek to sone
To graunten him so greet a libertee.
for playntly hir entente, as seyde she,
Was for to love him unwist, if she mighte,
And guerdon him with nothing but with sighte.

But Pandarus thoughte: It shal not be so,
If that I may; this nyce opinioun
Shal not be holden fully yeres two.
¶ What sholde I make of this a long sermoun?
He moste assente on that conclusioun
As for the tyme; and whan that it was eve,
And al was wel, he roos and took his leve.

And on his way ful faste homward he spedde,
And right for joye he felte his herte daunce;
And Troilus he fond alone abedde,
That lay as dooth these loveres, in a traunce,
Bitwixen hope and derk desesperaunce.
But Pandarus, right at his incominge,
He song, as who seyth: Lo! sumwhat I bringe.

And seyde: Who is in his bed so sone
Yburied thus? ¶ It am I, freend, quod he.
¶ Who, Troilus? may helpe me so the mone,
Quod Pandarus, thou shalt aryse and see
A charme that was sent right now to thee,
The which can helen thee of thyn accesse,
If thou do forthwith al thy besinesse.

¶ Ye, through the might of God! quod Troilus.
And Pandarus gan him the lettre take,
And seyde: Darde, God hath holpen us;
Have here a light, and loke on al this blake.
¶ But ofte gan the herte glade and quake
Of Troilus, whyl that he gan it rede,
So as the wordes yave him hope or drede.

But fynally, he took al for the beste
That she him wroot, for sumwhat he biheld
On which, him thoughte, he mighte his herte reste,
Al covered she the wordes under sheld.
Thus to the more worthy part he held,
That, what for hope and Pandarus biheste,
His grete wo foryede he at the leste.

But as we may alday ourselven see,
Through more wode or col, the more fyr;
Right so encrees of hope, of what it be,
Therwith ful ofte encreseth eek desyr;
Or, as an ook cometh of a litel spyr,
So through this lettre, which that she him sente,
Encresen gan desyr, of which he brente.

¶ Wherefore I seye alwey, that day and night
This Troilus gan to desiren more
Than he dide erst, thurgh hope, & dide his might
To pressen on, as by Pandarus lore,
And wryten to hir of his sorwes sore
fro day to day; he leet it not refreyde,
That by Pandare he wroot somwhat or seyde;

And dide also his othere observaunces
That to a lovere longeth in this cas;
And, after that these dees turnede on chaunces,
So was he outhir glad or seyde Alias!
And held after his gastes ay his pas;
And aftir swiche answeres as he hadde,
So were his dayes sory outhir gladd.

But to Pandare alwey was his recours,
And pitously gan ay til him to pleyne,
And him bisoughte of rede and som socours;
And Pandarus, that sey his wode peyne,
Wex wel neigh deed for routhe, sooth to seyne,
And bisily with al his herte caste
Som of his wo to sleen, and that as faste;

And seyde: Lord, and freend, and brother dere,
God woot that thy disease dooth me wo.
But woltow stinten al this woful chere,
And, by my trouthe, or it be dayes two,
But God toform, yet shal I shape it so,
That thou shalt come into a certayn place,
Theras thou mayst thyself hir preye of grace.

And certainly, I noot if thou it wost,
But tho that been expert in love it seye,
It is oon of the thinges that furthereth most,
A man to have a leysur for to preye,
And siker place his wo for to biwreie;
for in good herte it moot som routhe impresse,
To here and see the gittles in distresse.

¶ Daraunter thenkestow: though it be so
That kinde wolde doon hir to biginne
To han a maner routhe upon my wo,
Seyth Daunger: Nay, thou shalt me never winne;
So reuleth hir hir hertes goost withinne,
That, though she bende, yet she stant on rote;
¶ What in effect is this unto my bote?

¶ Thenk hereayeins, whan that the sturdy ook,
On which men hakketh ofte, for the nones,
Receyved hath the happy falling strook,
The grete sweigh doth it come al at ones,
As doon these rokkes or these milne stones,
for swifter cours cometh thing that is of wighte,
¶ Whan it descendeth, than don thinges lighte.

And reed that boweth doun for every blast,
ful lightly, cesse wind, it wol aryse;
But so nil not an ook whan it is cast;
It nedeth me nought thee longe to forbyse.
Men shal rejoysen of a greet empyse
Acheved wel, and stant withouten doute,
¶ Al han men been the lenger therabout.

But, Troilus, yet tel me, if thee lest,
A thing now which that I shal axen thee;
¶ Which is thy brother that thou lovest best
As in thy verray hertes privetee?
¶ Ywis, my brother Deiphebus, quod he.
¶ Now, quod Pandare, er houres twyes twelve,
He shal thee ese, unwist of it himselve.

Now lat me allone, and werken as I may,
Quod he; and to Deiphebus wente he tho
¶ Which hadde his lord and grete freend ben ay;
Save Troilus, no man he lovede so.
To telle in short, withouten wordes mo,
Quod Pandarus: I pray yow that ye be
freend to a cause which that toucheth me.

¶ Vis, pardee, quod Deiphebus, wel thou wost,
In al that ever I may, and God tofore,
Al nere it but for man I love most,
My brother Troilus; but sey wherfore
It is; for sith that day that I was bore,
I nas, ne nevermo to been I thinke,
Ayeins a thing that mighte thee forthinke.

¶ Pandare gan him thonke, and to him seyde:
Lo, sire, I have a lady in this toun,
That is my nece, and called is Criseyde,
Which som men wolden doon oppressioun,
And wrongfully have hir possessioun:
Wherfor I of your lordship yow biseche
To been our freend, withoute more speche.

¶ Deiphebus him answerde: O, is not this,
That thou spekest of to me thus straungely,
Criseyda, my freend? ¶ He seyde: Yis.
¶ Than nedeth, quod Deiphebus hardely,
Namore to speke, for trusteth wel, that I
Wol be hir champioun with spore and yerde;
Iroughte nought though alle hir foos it herde.

But tel me, thou that woost al this matere,
How I might best awaylen? now lat see.
¶ Quod Pandarus: If ye, my lord so dere,
Wolden as now don this honour to me,
To prayen hir tomorwe, lo, that she
Com unto yow hir pleyntes to devyse,
Hir adversaries wolde of hit agryse.

And if I more dorste preye as now,
And chargin yow to have so greet travayle,
To han som of your bretheren here with yow,
That mighten to hir cause bet awayle,
Than, woot I wel, she mighte never fayle
for to be holpen, what at your instaunce,
What with hir othere freendes governaunce.

¶ Deiphebus, which that comen was, of kinde,
To al honour and bountee to consente,
Answerde: It shal be doon; and I can finde
Yet gretter help to this in myn entente.
What wolt thou seyn, if I for Eleyne sente
To speke of this? I trowe it be the beste;
for she may leden Paris as hir leste.

Of Ector, which that is my lord, my brother,
It nedeth nought to preye him freend to be;
for I have herd him, o tyme and eek other,
Speke of Criseyde swich honour, that he
May seyn no bet, swich hap to him bath she.
It nedeth nought his helpes for to crave;
He shal be swich, right as we wole him have.

Spek thou thyself also to Troilus
On my bihalve, and pray him with us dyne.
¶ Sire, al this shal be doon, quod Pandarus;
And took his leve, and never gan to fyne,
But to his neces hous, as streght as lyne,
He com; and fond hir fro the mete aryse;
And sette him down, and spak right in this wyse.

He seyde: O veray God, so have I ronnel
Lo, nece myn, see ye nought how I swete?
I noot whether ye the more thank me conne.
Be ye nought war how that fals Poliphete
Is now aboute eftsones for to plete,
And bringe on yow advocacyes newe?
¶ I? no, quod she, and chaunged al hir hewe.

What is he more aboute, me to drecche
And doon me wrong? what shal I do, alas?
Yet of himself nothing ne wolde I recche,
Nere it for Antenor and Eneas,
That been his freendes in swich maner cas;
But, for the love of God, myn uncle dere,
No fors of that, lat him have al yfere;

Withouten that, I have ynough for us.
¶ Nay, quod Pandare, it shal nothing be so.
for I have been right now at Deiphebus,
And Ector, and myne othere lordes mo,
And shortly maked eche of hem his fo;
That, by my thrift, he shal it never winne
for ought he can, whan that so he biginne.

¶ And as they casten what was best to done,
Deiphebus, of his owene curtesye,
Com hir to preye, in his propre persone,
To holde him on the morwe companye
At diner, which she nolde not denye,
But goodly gan to his preyere obeye.
He thonked hir, and wente upon his weye.

Whanne this was doon, this Pandare up anon,
To telle in short, and forth gan for to wende
To Troilus, as stille as any stoon,
And al this thing he tolde him, word and ende;
And how that he Deiphebus gan to blende;
And seyde him: Now is tyme, if that thou come,
To bere thee wel tomorwe, and al is wonne.

Now spek, now prey, now pitously compleyne;
Lat not for nyce shame, or drede, or slouth;
Somtyme a man mot telle his owene peyne;
Bileve it, and she shal han on thee routh;
Thou shalt be saved by thy feyth, in trouthe.
But wel wot I, thou art now in a drede;
And what it is, I leye, I can arede.

Thow thinkest now: How sholde I doon al this?
for by my cheres mosten folk aspye,
That for hir love is that I fare amis;
Yet hadde I lever unwist for sorwe dye.
Now think not so, for thou dost greet folye.
for right now have I founden o manere
Of sleighte, for to coveren al thy chere.

Thow shalt gon over night, and that as blyve,
Unto Deiphebus hous, as thee to pleye,
Thy maladye away the bet to dryve,
for why thou semest syk, soth for to seye.
Sone after that, doun in thy bed thee leye,
And sey, thow mayst no lenger up endure,
And lye right there, and byde thyn aventure.

Sey that thy fever is wont thee for to take
The same tyme, and lasten til amowre;
And lat see now how wel thou canst it make,
for, pardee, syk is he that is in sorwe,
Go now, farewell! and, Venus here to borwe,
I hope, and thou this purpos holde ferme,
Thy grace she shal fully ther conferme.

¶ Quod Troilus: Ywis, thou nedeless
Counseylest me, that sykliche I me feyne!
for I am syk in earnest, douteless,
So that wel neigh I sterve for the peyne.
¶ Quod Pandarus: Thou shalt the bettre pleyne,
And hast the lasse nede to countrefete;
for him men demen hoot that men seen swete.

Lo, holde thee at thy triste cloos, and I
Shal wel the deer unto thy bowe dryve.
¶ Cherwith he took his leve al softly,
And Troilus to paleys wente blyve.
So glad ne was he never in al his tyve;
And to Pandarus reed gan al assente,
And to Deiphebus hous at night he wente.

What nedeth yow to tellen al the chere
That Deiphebus unto his brother made,
Or his accesse, or his syklych manere,
how men gan him with clothes for to lade,
Whan he was leyde, and how men wolde him glade?
But al for nought, he held forth ay the wyse
That ye han herd Pandare er this devyse.

But certeyn is, er Troilus him leyde,
Deiphebus had him prayed, over night,
To been a freend and helping to Criseyde.
God woot, that he it graunted anon right,
To been hir fulle freend with al his might.
But swich a nede was to preye him thenne,
As for to bidde a wood man for to renne.

The morwen com, and neighen gan the tyme
Of meeltyd, that the faire quene Eleyne
Shoop hir to been, an houre after the pryme,
With Deiphebus, to whom she nolde feyne;
But as his suster, hoonly, sooth to seyne,
She com to diner in hir playn entente.
But God and Pandare wiste al what this mente.

Come eek Criseyde, al innocent of this,
Antigone, hir sister Tarbe also;
But flee we now prolixitee best is,
for love of God, and lat us faste go
Right to the effect, withoute tales mo,
Why al this folk assembled in this place;
And lat us of hir saluinges pace.

Gret honour dide hem Deiphebus, certeyn,
And fedde hem wel with al that mighte lyke.
But evermore: Allas! was his refreyne,
My goode brother Troilus, the syke,
Lyth yet. And therwithal he gan to syke;
And after that, he peyned him to glade
hem as he mighte, and chere good he made.

Compleyned eek Eleyne of his syknesse
So feithfully, that pitee was to here,
And every wight gan waxen for accesse
A leche anon, and seyde: In this manere
Men curen folk; this charme I wol yow lere.
¶ But there sat oon, al list hir nought to teche,
That thoughte, best coude I yet been his leche.

After compleynt, him gonnen they to preyse,
As folk don yet, whan som wight hath bigonne
To preyse a man, and up with prys him reyse
A thousand fold yet hyer than the sonne:
He is, he can, that fewe lordes conne.
¶ And Pandarus, of that they wolde afferme,
He not forgot hir preysing to conferme.

Herde al this thing Criseyde wel ynough,
And every word gan for to notifiye;
for which with sobre chere hir herte lough;
for who is that ne wolde hir glorifiye,
To mowen swich a knight don live or dye?
But al passe I, lest ye to longe dwelle;
for for o fyn is al that ever I telle.

The tyme com, fro diner for to ryse,
And, as hem oughte, arisen everychoon,
And gonne a while of this and that devyse.
But Pandarus brak al this speche anon,
And seyde to Deiphebus: Wole ye goon,
If youre wille be, as I yow preyde,
To speke here of the nedes of Criseyde?

¶ Eleyne, which that by the hond hir held,
Took first the tale, and seyde: Go we blyve;
And goodly on Criseyde she biheld,
And seyde: Joves lat him never thryve,
That dooth yow harm, & bringe him sone of lyve
And yeve me sorwe, but he shal it rewe,
If that I may, and alle folk be trewe.

¶ Tel thou thy neces cas, quod Deiphebus
To Pandarus, for thou canst best it telle.
¶ My lordes and my ladyes, it stant thus;
What sholde I lenger, quod he, do yow dwelle?
¶ He rong hem out a proces lyk a belle,
Upon hir fo, that highte Poliphete,
So heynous, that men mighte on it spete.

Answerde of this ech worse of hem than other,
And Poliphete they gonnen thus to warien:
An honged be swich oon, were he my brother;
And so he shal, for it ne may not varien.
¶ What sholde I lenger in this tale tarien?
Pleyntly, at ones, alle they hir highten,
To been hir helpe in al that ever they mighten.

Spak than Eleyne, and seyde: Pandarus,
Woot ought my lord, my brother, this matere,
I mene, Ector? or woot it Troilus?
¶ He seyde: Ye, but wole ye now me here?
Me thinketh this, sith Troilus is here,
It were good, if that ye wolde assente,
She tolde herself him al this, er she wente.

Troilus and
Criseyde.
Liber II.

for he wole have the more hir grief at herte,
By cause, lo, that she a lady is;
And, by your leve, I wol but right in sterte,
And do yow wite, and that anon, ywis,
If that he slepe, or wole ought here of this.
And in he lepte, and seyde him in his ere:
God have thy soule, ybrought have I thy bere!

To smylen of this gan tho Troilus,
And Pandarus, withoute rekeninge,
Out wente anon to Eleyne and Deiphebus,
And seyde hem: So there be no tarynge,
Ne more pres, he wol wel that ye bringe
Criseyda, my lady, that is here;
And as he may endure, he wole here.

But wel ye woot, the chaumbre is but lyte,
And fewe folk may lightly make it warm;
Now loketh ye, for I wol have no wyte,
To bringe in prees that mighte doon him harm
Or him disesen, for my bettre arm,
Wher it be bet she byde til eftsones;
Now loketh ye, that knowen what to doon is.

I sey for me, best is, as I can knowe,
That no wight in ne wente but ye tweye,
But it were I, for I can, in a throwe,
Reherce hir cas, unlyk that she can seye;
And after this, she may him ones preye
To ben good lord, in short, and take hir leve;
This may not muchel of his ese him reve.

And eek, for she is straunge, he wol forbere
His ese, which that him thar nought for yow;
Eek other thing, that toucheth not to here,
He wol me telle, I woot it wel right now,
That secret is, and for the tounes prow.
And they, that nothing knewe of this entente,
Withoute more, to Troilus in they wente.

Eleyne in al hir goodly softe wyse,
Gan him saluwe, and womanly to pleye,
And seyde: Ywis, ye moste alweyes aryse!
Now fayre brother, beth al hool, I preye!
And gan hir arm right over his sholder leye,
And him with al hir wit to recomforte;
As she best coude, she gan him to disporte.

So after this quod she: We yow biseke,
My dere brother, Deiphebus, and I,
for love of God, and so doth Pandare eke,
To ben good lord and freend, right hertely,
Unto Criseyde, which that certeinly
Receyveth wrong, as woot wel here Pandare,
That can hir cas wel bet than I declare.

This Pandarus gan newe his tunge affyle,
And al hir cas reherce, and that anon;
Whan it was seyde, sone after, in a while,
Quod Troilus: As sone as I may goon,
I wol right fayn with al my might ben oon,
Have God my trouthe, hir cause to sustene.
Good thrift have ye, quod Eleyne the quene.

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Quod Pandarus: And if your wille be,
That she may take hir leve, er that she go,
Or elles God forbede, tho quod he,
If that she vouche sauf for to do so.
And with that word quod Troilus: Ye two,
Deiphebus, and my suster leef and dere,
To yow have I to speke of o matere,

To ben avysed by your reed the bettre:
And fond, as hap was, at his beddes heed,
The copie of a tretis and a lettre,
That Ector hadde him sent to axen reed,
If swich a man was worthy to ben deed,
Woot I nought who; but in a grisly wyse
He preyde hem anon on it avyse.

Deiphebus gan this lettre to unfold
In earnest greet; so dide Eleyne the quene;
And rominge outward, fast it gan biholde,
Downward a steyre, into an herber grene.
This ilke thing they redded hem bitwene;
And largely, the mountaunce of an houre,
They gonne on it to reden and to poure.

Now lat hem rede, and turne we anon
To Pandarus, that gan ful faste pryde
That al was wel, and out he gan to goon
Into the grete chambre, and that in hye,
And seyde: God save al this companye!
Com, nece myn; my lady quene Eleyne
Abydeth yow, and eek my lordes tweyne.

Rys, take with yow your nece Antigone,
Or whom yow list, or no fors, hardily;
The lasse prees, the bet; com forth with me,
And loke that ye thonke humbly
Hem alle three, and, whan ye may goodly
Your tyme ysee, taketh of hem your leve,
Lest we to longe his restes him bireve.

Al innocent of Pandarus entente,
Quod tho Criseyde: Go we, uncle dere;
And arm in arm inward with him she wente,
Avysed wel hir wordes and hir chere;
And Pandarus, in earnestful manere,
Seyde: Alle folk, for Goddes love, I preye,
Stinteth right here, and softely yow pleye.

Aviseh yow what folk ben here withinne,
And in what plyt oon is, God him amende!
And inward thus ful softely biginne;
Nece, I conjure and heighly yow defende,
On his half, which that sowle us alle sende,
And in the vertue of corounes tweyne,
Slee nought this man, that hath for yow this payne!

fy on the devel! think which oon he is,
And in what plyt he lyth; com of anon;
Think al swich taryed tyd, but lost it nis!
That wol ye bothe seyn, whan ye ben oon.
Secoundelich, ther yet devyneth noon
Upon yow two; com of now, if ye conne;
Whyl folk is blent, lo, al the tyme is womne!

In titering, and pursuite, and delayes,
The folk devyne at wagginge of a stree;
And though ye wolde han after merye dayes,
And dar ye nought, and why? for she, and she
Than swich a word; thus loked he, and he;
Spak swich a word, I dar not with yow dele;
Lest tyme I loste, I dar not with yow dele;
Com of therfore, and bringeth him to hele.

But now to yow, ye lovers that ben here,

Was Troilus nought in a carkedort,
That lay, and mighte whispringe of hem
here,
And thoughte: O Lord, right now renneth
my sort
fully to dye, or han anon comfort,
And was the firste tyme he shulde hir preye
Of love; O mighty God, what shal he seye?
Explicit Secundus Liber.

Troilus and
Criseyde.
Liber II.

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TROILUS AND CRISEYDE. LIBER TERCIVS.
Incipit Prohemium Tercii Libri.



BLISFUL LIGHT, OF WHICHE THE
 beemes clere
 Adorneth al the thridde hevene faire!
 O sonnes leef, O Joves doughter dere,
 Plesaunce of love, O goodly debonaire,
 In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire!
 O verray cause of hele and of gladnesse,

Yheried be thy might and thy goodnesse!

In hevene and helle, in erthe and salte see
 Is felt thy might, if that I wel descerne;
 As man, brid, best, fish, herbe and grene tree
 Thee fele in tymes with vapour eterne.
 God loveth, and to love wol nought wene;
 And in this world no lyves creature,
 Withouten love, is worth, or may endure.

Ye Joves first to thilke effectes glade,
 Thorugh which that thinges liven alle and be,
 Comeveden, and amorous him made
 On mortal thing, and as yow list, ay ye
 Yeve him in love ese or adversitee;
 And in a thousand formes doun him sente
 For love in erthe, and whom yow liste, he
 hente.

Ye fiershe Mars apeysen of his ire,
 And, as yow list, ye maken hertes digne;
 Al gates, hem that ye wol sette afyre,
 They dreden shame, and vices they resigne;
 Ye do hem corteys be, fresshe and benigne,
 And hye or lowe, after a wight entendeth;
 The joyes that he hath, your might him
 sendeth.



Incipit Liber Tercius.

HY at this mene whyle
 Troilus,
 Recorde his lessoun
 in this manere:
 Ma fey! thought he,
 thus wole I seye and
 thus;
 Thus wole I pleyne un-
 to my lady dere;
 That word is good, and

this shal be my chere;
 This nil I not foryeten in no wyse.
 God leve him werken as he gan devyse.

And I, lord, so that his herte gan to quappe,
 Heringe hir come, and shorte for to syke!
 And Pandarus, that ladde hir by the lappe,
 Com ner, and gan in at the curtin pyke,
 And seyde: God do bote on alle syke!
 See, who is here yow comen to visyte;
 Lo, here is she that is your deeth to wyte.

Therwith it semed as he wepte almost:
 A ha, quod Troilus so rewfully,
 Wher me be wo, O mighty God, thou wost!
 Who is al there? I see nought trewely.
 Sire, quod Criseyde, it is Pandarus and I.

Ye holden regne and hous in unitee;
 Ye soothfast cause of frendship been
 also;
 Ye knowe al thilke covered qualitee
 Of thinges which that folk on wondren so,
 Whan they can not construe how it may jo,
 She loveth him, or why he loveth here;
 As why this fish, and nought that, cometh
 to were.

Ye folk a lawe han set in universe,
 And this knowe I by hem that lovers be,
 That whoso stryvet with yow hath the
 werse:

Now, lady bright, for thy benignitee,
 At reverence of hem that serven thee,
 Whos clerk I am, so techeth me devyse
 Som joye of that is felt in thy servyse.

Ye in my naked herte sentement
 Inhelde, and do me shewe of thy swetnesse.
 Caliope, thy vois be now present,
 For now is nede; sestow not my destresse,
 How I mot telle anon right the gladnesse
 Of Troilus, to Venus herynge?
 To which gladnes, who nede hath, God him
 bringe!

Explicit prohemium Tercii Libri.

Ye, swete herte? alas, I may nought ryse
To knele, and do yow honour in som wyse.

And dressede him upward, and she right tho
Can bothe here hondes softe upon him leye:
O, for the love of God, do ye not so
To me, quod she, ey! what is this to seye?
Sire, come am I to yow for causes tweye;
first, yow to thonke, and of your lordshipe eke
Continuance I wolde yow biseke.

This Troilus, that herde his lady preye
Of lordship him, wex neither quik ne deed,
Ne mighte a word for shame to it seye,
Although men sholde smyten of his heed.
But Lord, so he wex sodeinliche reed,
And sire, his lesson, that he wende conne,
To preyen hir, is thurgh his wit yronne.

Criseyde al this aspyede wel ynough,
for she was wys, and lovede him neverthelasse,
Al nere he malapert, or made it tough,
Or was to bold, to singe a fool a masse.
But whan his shame gan somewhat to passe,
his reasons, as I may my rymes holde,
I yow wol telle, as techen bokes olde.

In chaunged vois, right for his verrey drede,
Which vois eek quook, and therto his manere
Goodly abayst, and now his hewes rede,
Now pale, unto Criseyde, his lady dere,
With look down cast and humble yolden chere,
Lo, the alderfirste word that him asterte
Was, twyes: Mercy, mercy, swete herte!

And stinte a whyl, and whan he mighte out-
bringe,
The nexte word was: God wot, for I have,
As feythfully as I have had konninge,
Ben youre, also God my sowle save;
And shal, til that I, woful wight, be grave.
And though I dar ne can unto yow pleyne,
Ywis, I suffre nought the lasse payne.

Thus muche as now, O wommanliche wyf,
I may outbringe, and if this yow displese,
That shal I wreke upon myn owne lyf
Right sone, I trowe, and doon your herte an ese,
If with my deeth your herte I may apese.
But sin that ye han herd me somewhat seye,
Now recche I never how sone that I deye.

Therwith his manly sorwe to biholde,
It mighte han maad an herte of stoon to rewe;
And Pandare weep as he to watre wolde,
And poked ever his nece newe and newe,
And seyde: Wo bigon ben hertes trewe!
for love of God, make of this thing an ende,
Or slee us bothe at ones, er that ye wende.

I? what? quod she, by God and by my trouthe,
I noot nought what ye wilne that I seye.

I? what? quod he, that ye han on him routhe,
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for Goddes love, and doth him nought to deye,
Now thanne thus, quod she, I wolde him
preye
To telle me the fyn of his entente;
Yet wiste I never wel what that he mente.

What that I mene, O swete herte dere?
Quod Troilus, O goodly fresshe free!
That, with the stremes of your eyen clere,
Ye wolde somtyme frendly on me see,
And thanne agreeen that I may ben he,
Withoute braunche of vyce in any wyse,
In trouthe alwey to doon yow my servyse

As to my lady right and chief resort,
With al my wit and al my diligence,
And I to han, right as yow list, comfort,
Under your yerde, egal to myn offence,
As deeth, if that I breke your defence;
And that ye deigne me so muche honour,
Me to comaunden ought in any houre.

And I to ben your verray humble trewe,
Secret, and in my paynes patient,
And evermo desire freshly newe,
To serven, and been ylyke ay diligent,
And, with good herte, al holly your talent
Receyven wel, how sore that me smerte,
Lo, this mene I, myn owne swete herte.

Quod Pandarus: Lo, here an hard request,
And resonable, a lady for to werne!
Now, nece myn, by natal Joves fest,
Were I a god, ye sholde sterve as yerne,
That heren wel, this man wol nothing yerne
But your honour, and seen him almost sterve,
And been so looth to suffren him yow serve.

With that she gan hir eyen on him caste
ful esily, and ful debonairly,
Hvysing hir, and hyed not to faste
With never a word, but seyde him softly:
Myn honour sauf, I wol wel trewely,
And in swich forme as he can now devyse,
Receyven him fully to my servyse,

Biseching him, for Goddes love, that he
Wolde, in honour of trouthe and gentillesse,
As I wel mene, eek mene wel to me,
And myn honour, with wit and besinesse,
Hy kepe; and if I may don him gladnesse,
from hennesforth, ywis, I nil not feyne:
Now beeth al hool, no lenger ye ne pleyne.

But natheless, this warne I yow, quod she,
Hinges sone although ye be, ywis,
Ye shul namore have soverainete
Of me in love, than right in that cas is;
Ne I nil forbere, if that ye doon amis,
To wrathen yow; and whyl that ye me serve,
Cherycen yow right after ye deserve.

And shortly, deré herte and al my knight,
k k 4

Beth glad, and draweth yow to lustinesse,
And I shal trewely, with al my might,
Your bittre tornen al into swetnesse;
If I be she that may yow do gladnesse,
For every wo ye shal recovere a blisse;
And him in armes took, and gan him kisse.

Al Pandarus on knees, and up his yē
To hevne threw, and held his hondes hye:
Immortal god! quod he, that mayst nought dyen,
Cupide I mene, of this mayst glorifye;
And Venus, thou mayst make melodye;
Withoute hond, me semeth that in towne,
for this merweyle, I here ech belle sowne.

But ho! no more as now of this matere,
forwhy this folk wol comen up anon,
That han the lettre red; lo, I hem here.
But I conjure thee, Criseyde, and oon,
And two, thou Troilus, whan thou mayst goon,
That at myn hous ye been at my warninge,
for I ful wel shal shape your cominge;

And eseth ther your hertes right ynough;
And lat see which of yow shal bere the belle
To speke of love aright! therwith he lough,
for ther have ye a layser for to telle.
Quod Troilus: How longe shal I dwelle
Er this be doon? Quod he: Whan thou mayst
ryse,
This thing shal be right as I yow devyse.

With that Eleyne and also Deiphebus
Tho comen upward, right at the steyses ende;
And Lord, so than gan grone Troilus,
his brother and his suster for to blende.
Quod Pandarus: It tyme is that we wende;
Tak, nece myn, your leve at alle three,
And lat hem speke, and cometh forth with me.

She took hir leve at hem ful thriftily,
As she wel coude, and they hir reverence
Unto the fulle didnen hardely,
And spoken wonder wel, in hir absence,
Of hir, in preysing of hir excellence,
hir governaunce, hir wit; and hir manere
Commended, it joye was to here.

Now lat hir wende unto hir owne place,
And tome we to Troilus ayein,
That gan ful lightly of the lettre passe,
That Deiphebus hadde in the gardin seyn.
And of Eleyne and him he wolde fayn
Delivered been, and seyde, that him leste
To slepe, and after tales have reste.

Eleyne him kiste, and took hir leve blyve,
Deiphebus eek, and hoom wente every wight;
And Pandarus, as faste as he may dryve,
To Troilus tho com, as lyne right;
And on a paillet, al that glade night,
By Troilus he lay, with mery chere,
To tale; and wel was hem they were yfere.

k k 4

Whan every wight was voided but they two,
And alle the dores were faste yshette,
To telle in short, withoute wordes mo,
This Pandarus, withouten any lette,
Up roos, and on his beddes syde him sette,
And gan to speken in a sobre wyse
To Troilus, as I shal yow devyse.

Myn alderlevest lord, and brother dere,
God woot, and thou, that it sat me so sore,
Whan I thee saw so languisshing tovere,
for love, of which thy wo wex alwey more;
That I, with al my might and al my lore,
Have ever sithen doon my bisinesse
To bringe thee to joye out of distresse;

And have it brought to swich plyt as thou wost,
So that, thorough me, thou stondest now in weye
To fare wel, I seye it for no boost,
And wostow why? for shame it is to seye,
for thee have I bigonne a gamen pleye
Which that I never doon shal eft for other,
Although he were a thousand fold my brother.

That is to seye, for thee am I bicomen,
Bitwixen game and earnest, swich a mene
As maken wommen unto men to comen;
Al sey I nought, thou wost wel what I mene.
for thee have I my nece, of vyces clene,
So fully maad thy gentillesse triste,
That al shal been right as thyselfe liste.

But God, that al wot, take I to witnessse,
That never I this for covetysse wroughte,
But only for to abregge that distresse,
for which wel nygh thou deydest, as me thoughte.
But gode brother, do now as thee oughte,
for Goddes love, and keep hir out of blame,
Sin thou art wys, and save alwey hir name.

for wel thou wost, the name as yet of here
Among the peple, as who seyth, halwed is;
for that man is unbore, I dar wel swere,
That ever wiste that she dide amis.
But wo is me, that I, that cause al this,
May thenken that she is my nece dere,
And I hir eem, and traytor eek yfere!

And were it wist that I, through myn engyn,
Hadde in my nece yput this fantasie,
To do thy lust, and hoolly to be thyn,
Why, al the world upon it wolde crye,
And seye, that I the worste trecherye
Dide in this cas, that ever was bigonne,
And she forlost, and thou right nought ywonne.

Wherefore, er I wol ferther goon a pas,
Yet eft I thee biseche and fully seye,
That privetee go with us in this cas,
That is to seye, that thou us never wreye;
And be nought wrooth, though I thee ofte preye
To holden secree swich an heigh matere;
for skilful is, thou wost wel, my preyere.

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And thenk what wo ther hath bitid er this,
for makinge of avauntes, as men rede;
And what mischaunce in this world yet ther is,
fro day to day, right for that wikked dede;
for which these wyse clerkes that ben dede
han ever yet proverbed to us yonge,
That firste vertu is to kepe tonge.

And, nere it that I wilne as now tabregge
Diffusioun of speche, I coude almost
A thousand olde stories thee alegge
Of wommen lost, thorough fals and foles bost;
Proverbes canst thyself ynowe, and wost,
Hyeins that vyce, for to been a labbe,
Alseyde men sooth as often as they gabbe.

O tonge, alas! so often herebifore
Hastow mad many a lady bright of hewe
Seyd: Welawey! the day that I was born!
And many a maydes sorwes for to newe;
And, for the more part, al is untrew
That men of yelp, and it were brought to preve;
Of kinde non avauntour is to leve.

Hvauntour and a lyere, al is on;
As thus: I pose, a womman graunte me
hir love, and seyth that other wol she non,
And I am sworn to holden it secree,
And after I go telle it two or three;
Ywis, I am avauntour at the leste,
And lyere, for I breke my biheste.

Now loke thanne, if they be nought to blame,
Swich maner folk; what shal I clepe hem, what,
That hem avaunte of wommen, and by name,
That never yet bihighte hem this ne that,
Ne knewe hem more than myn olde hat?
No wonder is, so God me sende hele,
Though wommen drede with us men to dele.

I sey not this for no mistrust of yow,
Ne for no wys man, but for foles nyce,
And for the harm that in the world is now,
As wel for foly ofte as for malyce;
for wel wot I, in wyse folk, that vyce
No womman drat, if she be wel avysed;
for wyse ben by foles harm chastysed.

But now to purpos; leve brother dere,
Have al this thing that I have seyde in minde,
And keep thee clos, and be now of good chere,
for at thy day thou shalt me trewe finde.
I shal thy proces sette in swich a kinde,
And God toform, that it shall thee suffyse,
for it shal been right as thou wolt devyse.

for wel I woot, thou menest wel, parde;
Therefore I dar this fully undertake.
Thou wost eek what thy lady graunted thee,
And day is set, the chartres up to make.
Have now good night, I may no lenger wake;
And bid for me, sin thou art now in blisse,
That God me sende deeth or sone lisse.

Who mighte telle half the joye or feste
Which that the sowle of Troilus tho felte,
Heringe the effect of Pandarus biheste?
His olde wo, that made his herte swelte,
Can tho for joye wasten and tomelte,
And al the richesse of his sykes sore
At ones fledde, he felte of hem no more.

But right so as these holtes and these hayes,
That han in winter dede been and dreye,
Revesten hem in grene, whan that May is,
Whan every lusty lyketh best to pleye;
Right in that selve wyse, sooth to seye,
Mex sodeynliche his herte ful of joye,
That gladder was ther never man in Troye.

And gan his look on Pandarus up caste
ful sobrelly, and frendly for to see,
And seyde: freend, in Aprille the laste,
As wel thou wost, if it remembre thee,
How neigh the deeth for wo thou founde me;
And how thou didest al thy bisnesse
To knowe of me the cause of my distresse.

Thou wost how longe I it forbar to seye
To thee, that art the man that I best triste;
And peril was it noon to thee bywrewe,
That wiste I wel; but tel me, if thee liste,
Sith I so looth was that thyself it wiste,
How dorste I mo tellen of this matere,
That quake now, and no wight may us here?

But natheles, by that God I thee swere,
That, as him list, may al this world governe,
And, if I lye, Achilles with his spere
Myn herte cleve, al were my lyf eterne,
As I am mortal, if I late or yerne
Wolde it biwrewe, or dorste, or sholde come,
for al the good that God made under sonne;

That rather deye I wolde, and determyne,
As thinketh me, now stokked in presoun,
In wrecchednesse, in filthe, and in vermyne,
Caytif to cruel king Agamenoun;
And this, in alle the temples of this toun,
Upon the goddes alle, I wol thee swere,
Tomorwe day, if that thee lyketh here.

And that thou hast so muche ydoon for me,
That I ne may it nevermore deserve,
This knowe I wel, al mighte I now for thee
A thousand tymes on a morwen sterve,
I can no more, but that I wol thee serve
Right as thy sclave, whiderso thou wende,
for evermore, unto my lyves ende!

But here, with al myn herte, I thee biseche,
That never in me thou deme swich folye
As I shal seyn; me thoughte, by thy speche,
That this, which thou me dost for companye,
I sholde wene it were a bauderye;
I am nought wood, alif I lewed be;
It is not so, that woot I wel, pardee.

But he that goth, for gold or for richesse,
On swich message, calle him what thee list;
And this that thou dost, calle it gentillesse,
Compassioun, and felawship, and trist;
Depart it so, for wyde where is wist
How that there is dyversitee required
Bitwixen thinges lyke, as I have lered.

And, that thou knowe I thenke nought ne wene
That this servyse a shame be or jape,
I have my faire suster Polixene,
Cassandre, Eleyne, or any of the frape;
Be she never so faire or wel yshape,
Tel me, which thou wilt of everichone,
To han for thyn, and lat me thanne allone.

But sin that thou hast don me this servyse,
My lyf to save, and for noon hope of mede,
So, for the love of God, this grete empyse
Parforme it out; for now is moste nede.
for high and low, withouten any drede,
I wol alwey thyne hestes alle kepe;
Have now good night, and lat us bothe slepe.

Thus held him ech with other wel apayed,
That al the world ne mighte it bet amende;
And, on the morwe, whan they were arayed,
Ech to his owene nedes gan entende.
But Troilus, though as the fyr he brende
for sharp desyr of hope and of plesaunce,
he not forgat his gode governaunce.

But in himself with manhod gan restreyn
Ech rakel dede and ech unbrydded chere,
That alle tho that liven, sooth to seyne,
Ne sholde han wist, by word or by manere,
What that he mente, as touching this matere.
from every wight as fer as is the cloude
he was, so wel dissimulen he coude.

And al the whyl which that I yow devyse,
This was his lyf; with al his fulle might,
By day he was in Martes high servyse,
This is to seyn, in armes as a knight;
And for the more part, the longe night
he lay, and thoughte how that he mighte serve
his lady best, hir thank for to deserve.

Nil I nought swere, although he lay softe,
That in his thought he nas sumwhat disesed,
Ne that he tornede on his pilwes ofte,
And wolde of that him missed han ben sesed;
But in swich cas man is nought alwey plesed,
for ought I wot, no more than was he;
That can I deme of possibilitie.

But certeyn is, to purpos for to go,
That in this whyle, as writen is in geste,
he say his lady somtyme; and also
She with him spak, whan that she dorste or leste,
And by hir bothe avys, as was the beste,
Apoynteden ful warty in this nede,
So as they dorste, how they wolde procede.

But it was spoken in so short a wyse,
In swich away alwey, and in swich fere,
Lest any wyght divynen or devyse
Wolde of hem two, or to it leye an ere,
That al this world so leef to hem ne were
As that Cupido wolde hem grace sende
To maken of hir speche aright an ende.

But thilke litel that they speke or wroughte,
His wyse goost took ay of al swich hede,
It semed hir, he wiste what she thoughte
Withouten word, so that it was no nede
To bidde him ought to done, or ought forbede;
for which she thoughte that love, al come it late,
Of alle joye hadde opned hir the yate.

And shortly of this proces for to pace,
So wel his werk and wordes he bisette,
That he so ful stood in his lady grace,
That twenty thousand tymes, or she lette,
She thonked God she ever with him mette;
So coude he him governe in swich servyse,
That al the world ne mighte it bet devyse.

forwhy she fond him so discreet in al,
So secret, and of swich obeisaunce,
That wel she felte he was to hir a wal
Of steel, and sheld from every displeaunce;
That, to ben in his gode governaunce,
So wys he was, she was no more afered,
I mene, as fer as oughte ben required.

And Pandarus, to quike alwey the fyr,
Was ever ylyke prest and diligent;
To ese his frend was set al his desyr.
He shof ay on, he to and fro was sent;
He lettres bar whan Troilus was absent.
That never man, as in his frendes nede,
Ne bar him bet than he, withouten drede.

But now, paraunter, som man wayten wolde
That every word, or sonde, or look, or chere
Of Troilus that I rehersen sholde,
In al this whyle, unto his lady dere;
I trowe it were a long thing for to here;
Or of what wight that stant in swich disjoynte,
His wordes alle, or every look, to poynte.

for sothe, I have not herd it doon er this,
In storye noon, ne no man here, I wene;
And though I wolde I coude not, ywis;
for ther was som epistel hem bitwene,
That wolde, as seyth myn auctor, wel contene
Neigh half this book, of which him list not wryte;
How sholde I thanne a lyne of it endyte?

But to the grete effect: than sey I thus,
That standing in concord and in quiete
Thise ilke two, Crisseyde and Troilus,
As I have told, and in this tyme swete,
Save only often mighte they not mete,
Ne layser have hir speches to fulfelle,
That it befel right as I shal yow telle,

That Pandarus, that ever dide his might
Right for the fyn that I shal speke of here,
As for to bringe to his hous som night
His faire nece, and Troilus yfere,
Wheras at leyser al this heigh matere,
Touching hir love, were at the fulle upbounde,
Hadde out of doute a tyme to it founde.

for he with greet deliberacioun
Hadde every thing that hert mighte avayle
for cast, and put in execucioun,
And neither laft for cost ne for travayle;
Come if hem lest, hem sholde nothing fayle;
And for to been in ought espyed there,
That, wiste he wel, an impossible were.

And dredeles, it cleer was in the wind
Of every pye and every lette game;
Now al is wel, for al the world is blind
In this matere, bothe fremed and tame.
This timber is al redy up to frame;
As lakketh nought but that we witen wolde
A certein houre, in whiche she comen sholde.

And Troilus, that al this purveyaunce
Knew at the fulle, and waytede on it ay,
Hadde hereupon eek maad gret ordenaunce,
And founde his cause, and therto his aray,
If that he were missed, night or day,
Therwhy he was aboute this servyse,
That he was goon to doon his sacrificyse,

And moste at swich a temple alone wake,
Answered of Appollo for to be;
And first, to seen the holy laurer quake,
Er that Appollo spak out of the tree,
To telle him next whan Grekes sholden flee,
And forthy lette him no man, God forbede,
But preyre Appollo helpen in this nede.

Now is ther litel more for to done,
But Pandare up, and shortly for to seyne,
Right sone upon the chaunging of the mone,
Whan lightles is the world a night or tweyne,
And that the welken shoop him for to reyne,
He streight amorwe unto his nece wente;
Ye han wel herd the fyn of his entente.

Whan he was come, he gan anon to pleye
As he was wont, and of himself to jape;
And fynally, he swor and gan hir seye,
By this and that, she sholde him not escape,
Ne lenger doon him after hir to gape;
But certeynly she moste, by hir leve,
Come soupen in his hous with him at eve.

At whiche she lough, and gan hir faste excuse,
And seyde: It rayneth; lo, how sholde I goon?
Lat be, quod he, ne stond not thus to muse;
This moot be doon, ye shal be ther anon.
So at the laste herof they felle at oon,
Or elles, softe he swor hir in hir ere,
He nolde never come ther she were.

Sone after this, to him she gan to rowne,
And asked him if Troilus were there?
He swor hir: Nay, for he was out of towne,
And seyde: Nece, I pose that he were,
Yow thurfte never have the more fere,
For rather than men mighte him ther aspye,
Me were lever a thousand fold to dye.

Nought list myn auctor fully to declare
What that she thoughte whan he seyde so,
That Troilus was out of town yfare,
As if he seyde therof sooth or no;
But that, withoute awayt, with him to go,
She graunted him, sith he hir that bisoughte,
And, as his nece, obeyed as hir oughte.

But natheles, yet gan she him biseche,
Although with him to goon it was no fere,
For to be war of goosish peples speche,
That dremen thinges whiche that never were,
And wel avyse him whom he broughte there;
And seyde him: Eem, sin I mot on yow triste,
Loke al be wel, and do now as yow liste.

He swor hir: Yis, by stokkes and by stones,
And by the goddes that in hevne dwelle,
Or elles were him lever, soule and bones,
With Pluto king as depe been in helle
As Tantalus! What sholde I more telle?
Whan al was wel, he roos and took his leve,
And she to souper com, whan it was eve.

With a certayn of hir owene men,
And with hir faire nece Antigone,
And othere of hir wommen nyne or ten;
But who was glad now, who, as trowe ye,
But Troilus, that stood and mighte it see
Thurghout a litel windowe in a stewe,
Ther he bishet, sin midnight, was in mewe.

Unwist of every wight but of Pandare?
But to the poynt; now whan she was ycome
With alle joye, and alle frendes fare,
Hir eem anon in armes hath hir nome,
And after to the souper, alle and some,
Whan tyme was, ful softe they hem sette;
God wot, ther was no deyntee for to fette.

And after souper gonnen they to ryse,
At ese wel, with hertes fresshe and glade,
And wel was him that coude best devyse
To lyken hir, or that hir laughen made.
He song; she pleyde; he tolde tale of Wade.
But at the laste, as every thing hath ende,
She took hir leve, and nedes wolde wende.

But O, fortune, executrice of wierdes,
O influences of thise hevnes hye!
Soth is, that, under God, ye ben our hierdes,
Though to us bestes been the causes wrye.
This mene I now, for she gan hoomward hye,
But execut was al bigyde hir leve,
At the goddes wil; for which she moste bleve.

The bente mone with hir hornes pale,
Saturne, and Jove, in Cancro joyned were,
That swich a rayn from hevne gan avale,
That every maner womman that was there
Hadde of that smoky reyn a verray fere;
At which Pandare tho lough, and seyde thenne:
Now were it tyme a lady to go henne!

But goode nece, if I mighte ever plesse
Yow anything, than prey I yow, quod he,
To doon myn herte as now so greet an ese
As for to dwelle here al this night with me,
For why this is your owene hous, pardee,
for, by my trouthe, I sey it nought agame,
To wende as now, it were to me a shame.

Criseyde, whiche that coude as muche good
As half a world, tok hede of his preyere;
And sin it ron, and al was on a flood,
She thoughte, as good chep may I dwellen here,
And graunte it gladly with a freendes chere,
And have a thank, as grucche and thanne abyde;
for hoom to goon it may nought wel byyde.

I wol, quod she, myn uncle leef and dere,
Sin that yow list, it skile is to be so;
I am right glad with yow to dwellen here;
I seyde but agame, I wolde go.
Ywis, graunt mercy, nece! quod he tho;
Were it a game or no, soth for to telle,
Now am I glad, sin that yow list to dwelle.

Thus al is wel; but tho bigan aright
The newe joye, and al the feste agayn;
But Pandarus, if goodly hadde he might,
He wolde han hyed hir to bedde fayn,
And seyde: Lord, this is an huge rayn!
This were a wedder for to slepen inne;
And that I rede us sone to beginne.

And nece, woot ye wher I wol yow leye,
for that we shul not ligen fer asonder,
And for ye neither shullen, dar I seye,
heren noise of reynes nor of thonder?
By God, right in my lyte closet yonder.
And I wol in that outer hous allone
Be wardeyn of your wommen everichone.

And in this middel chaumbre that ye see
Shul youre wommen slepen wel and softe;
And ther I seyde shal yourselve be;
And if ye ligen wel tonight, com ofte,
And careth not what wedder is on lofte.
The wyn anon, and whan so that yow leste,
So go we slepe, I trowe it be the beste.

Ther nis no more, but hereafter sone,
The voyde dronke, and travers drawe anon,
Can every wight, that hadde nought to done
More in that place, out of the chaumbre gon.
And evermo so sternelich it ron.
And blew therwith so wonderliche loude,
That wel neigh no man heren other coude.

Tho Pandarus, hir eem, right as him oughte,
With women swiche as were hir most aboute,
ful glad unto hir beddes syde hir broughte,
And toke his leve, and gan ful lowe loute,
And seyde: Here at this closet/dore withoute,
Right over thwart, your wommen ligen alle,
That, whom yow liste of hem, ye may here calle.

So whan that she was in the closet leyde,
And alle hir wommen forth by ordenaunce
Abedde weren, ther as I have seyde,
There was no more to skippen nor to traunce,
But boden go to bedde, with mischaunce,
If any wight was steringe anywhere,
And late hem slepe that abedde were.

But Pandarus, that wel coude eche a del
The olde daunce, and every poynt therinne,
Whan that he sey that alle thing was wel,
He thoughte he wolde upon his werk beginne,
And ganne the stewe/dore al softe unpinne,
And stille as stoon, withouten lenger lette,
By Troilus adoun right he him sette.

And, shortly to the poynt right for to gon,
Of al this werk he tolde him word and ende,
And seyde: Make thee redy right anon,
for thou shalt into hevne blisse wende.
Now blisful Venus, thou me grace sende,
Quod Troilus, for never yet no nede
Hadde I er now, ne halvendel the drede.

Quod Pandarus: Ne drede thee never a del,
for it shal been right as thou wilt desyre;
So thryve I, this night shal I make it wel,
Or casten al the gruwel in the fyre.
Yit blisful Venus, this night thou me enspyre,
Quod Troilus, as wis as I thee serve,
And ever bet and bet shal, til I sterve.

And if I hadde, O Venus ful of mirthe,
Aspectes badde of Mars or of Saturne,
Or thou combust or let were in my birthe,
Thy fader prey al thilke harm disturne
Of grace, and that I glad ayein may turne,
for love of him thou lovedest in the shawe,
I mene Adoon, that with the boor was slawe.

O Jove eek, for the love of faire Europe,
The whiche in forme of bole away thou fette;
Now help, O Mars, thou with thy bloody cope,
for love of Cipris, thou me nought ne lette;
O Phebus, thenk whan Dane hirselves shette
Under the bark, and laurer wex for drede,
Yet for hir love, O help now at this nede!

Mercurie, for the love of Hiersē eke,
for which Pallas was with Aglauros wrooth,
Now help, and eek Diane, I thee biseke,
That this viage be not to thee looth.
O fatal sustren, which, er any clooth
Me shapen was, my destene me sponne,
So helpeth to this werk that is bigonne!

¶ Quod Pandarus: Thou wrecched mouses herte,
Art thou agast so that she wol thee byte?
Why, don this furred cloke upon thy sherte,
And folowe me, for I wol han the wyte;
But byd, and lat me go bfore a lyte.
¶ And with that word he gan undo a trappe,
And Troilus he broughte in by the lappe.

The sterne wind so loude gan to route
That no wight other noyse mighte here;
And they that layen at the dore withoute,
ful sykerly they slepten alle yfere;
And Pandarus, with a ful sobre chere,
Goth to the dore anon withouten lette,
Theras they laye, and softlyt it shette.

And as he com ayeinward prively,
His nece awook, and asked: Who goth there?
¶ My dere nece, quod he, it am I;
Ne wondreth not, ne have of it no fere;
¶ And ner he com, and seyde hir in hir ere:
No word, for love of God I yow bisече;
Lat no wight ryse and heren of our speche.

¶ What! which wey be ye comen, benedicite?
Quod she, and how thus unwist of hem alle?
¶ Here at this secre trappe dore, quod he.
¶ Quod tho Crisseyde: Lat me som wight calle.
¶ Ey! God forbode that it sholde falle,
Quod Pandarus, that ye swich foly wroughte!
They mighte deme thing they never er thoughte!

It is nought good a sleping hound to wake,
Ne yeve a wight a cause to devyne;
Your wommen slepen alle, I undertake,
So that, for hem, the hous men mighte myne;
And slepen wolen til the sonne shyne.
And whan my tale al brought is to an ende,
Unwist, right as I com, so wol I wende.

Now nece myn, ye shul wel understonde,
Quod he, so as ye wommen demen alle,
That for to holde in love a man in honde,
And him hir Leef and Dere herte calle,
And maken him an howve above a calle,
I mene, as love an other in this whyle,
She doth herself a shame, and him a gyle.

Now wherby that I telle yow al this?
Ye woot yourself, as wel as any wight,
How that your love al fully graunted is
To Troilus, the worthieste knight,
Oon of this world, and therto trouthe plyght,
That, but it were on him along, ye nolde
him never falsen, whyl ye liven sholde.

Now stant it thus, that sith I fro yow wente,
This Troilus, right platly for to seyn,
Is thurgh a goter, by a prive wente,
Into my chaumbre come in al this reyn,
Unwist of every maner wight, certeyn,
Save of myself, as wisly have I joye,
And by that feith I shal Pryam of Troye!

And he is come in swich peyne and distresse
That, but he be al fully wood by this,
He sodeynly mot falle into wodnesse,
But if God helpe; and cause why this is,
He seyth him told is, of a freend of his,
How that ye sholde love oon that hatte Horaste,
for sorwe of which this night shalt been his laste.

¶ Crisseyde, which that al this wonder herde,
Gan sodeynly aboute hir herte colde,
And with a syk she sorwfully answerde:
Alas! I wende, whoso tales tolde,
My dere herte wolde me not holde
So lightly fals! alas! conceytes wronge,
What harm they doon, for now live I to longe!

Horaste! alas! and falsen Troilus?
I knowe him not, God helpe me so, quod she;
Alas! what wikked spirit tolde him thus?
Now certes, eem, tomorwe, and I him see,
I shal therof as ful excusen me
As ever dide womman, if him lyke;
¶ And with that word she gan ful sore syke.

¶ O God! quod she, so worldly selinesse,
Which clerkes callen fals felicitye,
Ymedled is with many a bitternesse!
ful anguisschous than is, God woot, quod she,
Conclououn of veyn prosperitee;
for either joyes comen nought yfere,
Or elles no wight hath hem alwey here.

O brotel wele of mannes joye unstable!
With what wight so thou be, or how thou pleye,
Eithen he woot that thou, joye, art muable,
Or woot it not, it moot ben oon of tweye;
Now if he woot it not, how may he seye
That he hath verray joye and selinesse,
That is of ignoraunce ay in derknesse?

Now if he woot that joye is transitorie,
As every joye of worldly thing mot flee,
Than every tyme he that hath in memorie,
The drede of lesing maketh him that he
May in no parfit selinesse be.
And if to lese his joye he set a myte,
Than semeth it that joye is worth ful lyte.

Wherfore I wol deffyne in this matere,
That trewely, for ought I can espye,
Ther is no verray wele in this world here,
But O, thou wikked serpent jalouseye,
Thou misbeleved and envious folye,
Why hastow Troilus me mad untriste,
That never yet agiltte him, that I wiste?

¶ Quod Pandarus: Thus fallen is this cas.
¶ Why, uncle myn, quod she, who tolde him this?
¶ Why doth my dere herte thus, alas?
¶ Ye woot, ye nece myn, quod he, what is;
I hope al shal be wel that is amis,
for ye may quenche al this, if that yow leste,
And doth right so, for I holde it the beste.

¶ So shal I do tomorwe, ywis, quod she,
And God toforn, so that it shal suffyse.
¶ Tomorwe? alas, that were a fayr, quod he,
Nay, nay, it may not stonden in this wyse;
for, nece myn, thus wryten clerkes wyse,
That peril is with drecching in ydrawe;
Nay, swich abodes been nought worth an hawe.

Nece, alle thing hath tyme, I dar avowe;
for whan a chaumbre afyr is, or an halle,
Wel more nede is, it sodeynly rescowe
Than to dispute, and axe amonges alle
How is this cande in the straw yfalle?
¶ benedicite! for al among that fare
The harm is doon, and farewel feldefare!

And, nece myn, ne take it not agreef,
If that ye suffre him al night in this wo,
God help me so, ye hadde him never leef,
That dar I seyn, now there is but we two;
But wel I woot, that ye wol not do so;
Ye been to wys to do so gret folye,
To putte his lyf al night in jupartye.

¶ Hadde I him never leef? By God, I wene
Ye hadde never thing so leef, quod she.
¶ Now by my thrift, quod he, that shal be sene;
for, sin ye make this ensample of me,
If I al night wolde him in sorwe see
for al the tresour in the toun of Troye,
I bidde God, I never mote have joye!

Now loke thanne, if ye, that been his love,
Shul putte al night his lyf in jupartye
for thing of nought! Now, by that God above,
Nought only this delay comth of folye,
But of malyce, if that I shal nought lye.
What, platly, and ye suffre him in distresse,
Ye neither bountee doon ne gentillesse!

¶ Quod tho Crisseyde: Wole ye doon o thing,
And ye therwith shal stinte al his disese;
have here, and bereth him this blew ring,
for ther is nothing mighte him bettre plesse,
Save I myself, ne more his herte apese;
And sey my dere herte, that his sorwe
Is causeles, that shal be seen tomorwe.

¶ A ring? quod he, ye, hasel wodes shaken!
Ye, nece myn, that ring moste han a stoon
That mighte dede men alyve maken;
And swich a ring, trowe I that ye have noon.
Discrecioun out of your heed is goon;
That fele I now, quod he, and that is routhe;
O tyme ylost, wel maystow cursen slouth!

¶ Wot ye not wel that noble and heigh corage
Ne sorweth not, ne stinteth eek for lyte?
But if a fool were in a jalouse rage,
I nolde setten at his sorwe a myte,
But fette him with a fewe wordes whyte
Another day, whan that I mighte him finde:
But this thing stont al in another kinde.

This is so gentil and so tendre of herte,
That with his deeth he wol his sorwes wreke;
for trusteth wel, how sore that him smerte,
He wol to yow no jalouse wordes speke.
And forthy, nece, er that his herte breke,
So spek yourself to him of this matere;
for with o word ye may his herte stere.

Now have I told what peril he is inne,
And his coming unwist to every wight;
Ne, pardee, harm may ther be noon ne sinne;
I wol myself be with yow al this night.
Ye knowe eek how it is your owne knight,
And that, by right, ye moste upon him triste,
And I, al prest to fecche him whan yow liste.

¶ This accident so pitous was to here,
And eek so lyk a sooth, at pryme face,
And Troilus hir knight to hir so dere,
His prive coming, and the siker place,
That, though that she dide him as thanne a grace,
Considered alle thinges as they stode,
No wonder is, sin she dide al for gode.

¶ Cryseyde answerde: As wisly God at reste
My sowle bringe, as me is for him wol!
And eem, ywis, fayn wolde I doon the beste,
If that I hadde grace to do so.
But whether that ye dwelle or for him go,
I am, til God me bettre minde sende,
At dulcarnon, right at my wittes ende.

¶ Quod Pandarus: Ye, nece, wol ye here?
Dulcarnon called is fleminge of wrecches;
It semeth hard, for wrecches wol not lere
for verray slouth or othere wilful tecches;
This seyde by hem that be not worth two fecches.
But ye ben wys, and that we han on honde
Nis neither hard, ne skilful to withstonde.

¶ Thanne, eem, quod she, doth herof as yow list;
But er he come I wil up first aryse;
And, for the love of God, sin al my trist
Is on yow two, and ye ben bothe wyse,
So wircheth now in so discreet a wyse,
That I honour may have, and he plesaunce;
for I am here al in your governaunce.

¶ That is wel seyde, quod he, my nece dere,
Ther good thrift on that wyse gentil herte!
But liggeth stille, and taketh him right here,
It nedeth not no ferther for him sterte;
And ech of yow ese otheres sorwes smerte,
for love of God; and, Venus, I thee herie;
for sone hope I we shulle ben alle merie.

¶ This Troilus ful sone on knees him sette
ful sobrelly, right by hir beddes heed,
And in his beste wyse his lady grette;
But Lord, so she wex sodeynliche reed!
Ne, though men sholden amyten of hir heed,
She coude nought a word aright outbringe
So sodeynly, for his sodeyn cominge.

But Pandarus, that so wel coude fele
In every thing, to pleye anon bigan,
And seyde: Neece, see how this lord can knele!
Now, for your trouthe, seeth this gentil man!
And with that word he for a quisshe ran,
And seyde: Kneleth now, whyl that yow leste,
Ther God your hertes bringe sone at reste!

Can I not seyn, for she bad him not ryse,
If sorwe it putte out of hir remembraunce,
Or elles if she toke it in the wyse
Of duete, as for his observaunce;
But wel finde I she dide him this plesaunce,
That she him kiste, although she syked sore;
And bad him sitte adoun withouten more.

Quod Pandarus: Now wol ye wel biginne;
Now doth him sitte, gode nece dere,
Upon your beddes syde al there withinne,
That ech of yow the bet may other here.
And with that word he drew him to the fere,
And took a light, and foud his contaunce
As for to loke upon an old romaunce.

Criseyde, that was Troilus lady right,
And cleer stood on a ground of sikernesse,
Al thoughte she, hir servaunt and hir knight
Ne sholde of right non untrouthe in hir gesse,
Yet natheles, considered his distresse,
And that love is in cause of swich folye,
Thus to him spak she of his jelousye:

Lo, herte myn, as wolde the excellence
Of love, ayeins the which that no man may,
Ne oughte eek goodly maken resistance;
And eek bycause I felte wel and say
Your grete trouthe, and servyse every day;
And that your herte al myn was, sooth to seyne,
This droof me for to rewe upon your peyne.

And your goodnesse have I founde alwey yit,
Of whiche, my dere herte and at my knight,
I thonke it yow, as fer as I have wit,
Al can I nought as muche as it were right;
And I, emforth my conninge and my might,
Have and ay shal, how sore that me smerte,
Ben to yow trewe and hool, with al myn herte;

And dredeles, that shal be founde at preve,
But, herte myn, what al this is to seyne
Shal wel be told, so that ye nought yow greve,
Though I to yow right on yourself compleyne.
For therwith mene I fynally the peyne,
That halt your herte and myn in hevinesse,
fully to sleen, and every wrong redresse.

My goode, myn, not I forwhy ne how
That jelousye, alas! that wikked wivere,
Thus causeles is copen into yow;
The harm of which I wolde fayn deliver!
Alas! that he, al hool, or of him slivere,
Shuld have his refut in so digne a place,
Ther Jove him sone out of your herte arace!

But O, thou Jove, O auctor of nature,
Is this an honour to thy deitee,
That folk ungiltif suffren here injure,
And who that giltif is, al quit goth he?
O were it leful for to pleyne on thee,
That undeserved suffrest jelousye,
And that I wolde upon thee pleyne and crye!

Eek al my wo is this, that folk now usen
To seyn right thus: Ye, jelousye is love!
And wolde a busshe venim al excusen,
For that o greyn of love is on it shove!
But that wot heighe God that sit above,
If it be lyker love, or hate, or grame;
And after that, it oughte bere his name.

But certeyn is, some maner jelousye
Is excusable more than som, ywis.
As whan cause is, and som swich fantasye
With pietee so wel repressed is,
That it unnethe dooth or seyth amis,
But goodly drinketh up al his distresse;
And that excuse I, for the gentillesse.

And som so ful of furie is and despyt,
That it sourmoundeth his repressioun;
But herte myn, ye be not in that plyt,
That thanke I God, for whiche your passioun
I wol not calle it but illusioun,
Of habundaunce of love and bisy cure,
That dooth your herte this disese endure.

Of which I am right sory, but not wrooth;
But, for my devoir and your hertes reste,
Wherso yow list, by ordal or by ooth,
By sort, or in what wyse so yow leste,
for love of God, lat preve it for the beste!
And if that I be giltif, do me deye,
Alas! what mighte I more doon or seye?

With that a fewe brighte teres newe
Out of hir eyen fille, and thus she seyde:
Now God, thou wost, in thought ne dede untrew
To Troilus was never yet Criseyde.
With that hir heed down in the bed she leyde,
And with the shete it wreigh, and syghed sore,
And held hir pees; not o word spak she more.

But now help God to quenchen al this sorwe,
So hope I that he shal, for he best may;
for I have seyn, of a ful misty morwe
folwen ful ofte a mery someres day;
And after winter folweth grene May.
Men seen alday, and reden eek in stories,
That after sharpe shoures been victories.

This Troilus, whan he hir wordes herde,
Have ye no care, him liste not to slepe;
for it thoughte him no strokes of a yerde
To here or seen Criseyde his lady wepe;
But wel he felte aboute his herte crepe,
for every teer which that Criseyde astarte,
The crampe of deeth, to streyne him by the herte.

And in his minde he gan the tyme acurse
That he cam there, and that he was born;
for now is wikked yturned into worse,
And al that labour he hath doon biforn,
he wende it lost, he thoughte he nas but lorn.
O Pandarus, thoughte he, alas! thy wyle
serveth of nought, so weylawey the wyle!

And therewithal he heng adoun the heed,
And fil on knees, and sorwfully he sighte;
What mighte he seyn? he felte he nas but deed,
for wrooth was she that shulde his sorwes lighte.
Natheles, whan that he spoken mighte,
Than seyde he thus: God woot, that of this game,
Whan al is wist, than am I not to blame!

Therwith the sorwe so his herte shette,
That from his eyen fil ther not a tere,
And every spirit his vigour in knette,
So they astoned and oppressed were.
The feling of his sorwe, or of his fere,
Or of ought elles, fled was out of towne;
And doun he fel al sodeynly aswowne.

This was no litel sorwe for to see;
But al was hust, and Pandare up as faste:
O nece, pees, or we be lost, quod he,
Beth nought agast, but certeyn, at the laste,
for this or that, he into bedde him caste,
And seyde: O theef, is this a mannes herte?
And of he rente al to his bare sherte;

And seyde: Neece, but ye helpe us now,
Alas, your owne Troilus is lorn!
Ywis, so wolde I, and I wiste how,
ful fayn, quod she; alas! that I was born!
Ye, nece, wol ye pullen out the thorn
That stiketh in his herte? quod Pandare;
Sei Al foryeve, and stint is al this fare!

Ye, that to me, quod she, ful lever were
Than al the good the sonne aboute gooth;
And therewithal she swoor him in his ere:
Ywis, my dere herte, I am nought wrooth,
have here my trouthe and many another ooth;
Now speek to me, for it am I, Criseyde!
But al for nought; yet mighte he not abreyde.

Therwith his pous and pawmes of his hondes
They gan to frote, and wete his temples tweyne,
And, to deliveren him from bittre bondes,
She ofte him kiste; and, shortly for to seyne,
him to revoken she dide al hir peyne.
And at the laste, he gan his breeth to drawe,
And of his swough sone after that adawe,

And gan bet minde and reson to him take,
But wonder sore he was abayst, ywis.
And with a syk, whan he gan bet awake,
he seyde: O mercy, God, what thing is this?
Why do ye with yourselfen thus amis?
Quod tho Criseyde; is this a mannes game?
What, Troilus! wol ye do thus, for shame?

And therewithal hir arm over him she leyde,
And al foryaf, and ofte tyme him keste.
He thonked hir, and to hir spak, and seyde
As fil to purpos for his herte reste.
And she to that answerde him as hir leste;
And with hir goodly wordes him disporte
She gan, and ofte his sorwes to comforte.

Quod Pandarus: for ought I can espyen,
This light nor I ne serven here of nought;
Light is not good for syke folkes yen.
But for the love of God, sin ye be brought
In thus good plyt, lat now non hevye thought
Ben hanginge in the hertes of yow tweye:
And bar the cande to the chimeneye.

Sone after this, though it no nede were,
Whan she swich othes as hir list devyse
Hadde of him take, hir thoughte tho no fere,
Ne cause eek non, to bidde him thennes ryse.
Yet lesse thing than othes may suffyse
In many a cas; for every wight, I gesse,
That loveth wel meneth but gentillesse.

But in effect she wolde wite anon
Of what man, and eek where, and also why
He jelous was, sin ther was cause noon;
And eek the signe, that he took it by,
She bad him that to telle hir bisily,
Or elles, certeyn, she bar him on honde,
That this was doon of malis, hir to fonde.

Withouten more, shortly for to seyne,
He moste obeie unto his lady heste;
And for the lasse harm, he moste feyne.
He seyde hir, whan she was at swiche a feste
She mighte on him han looked at the leste;
Not I not what, al dere ynough a risshe,
As he that nedes moste a cause fiashe.

And she answerde: Swete, al were it so,
What harm was that, sin I non yvel mene?
for, by that God that boughte us bothe two,
In alle thinge is myn entente clene.
Swich arguments ne been not worth a bene;
Wol ye the childish jelous contrefete?
Now were it worthy that ye were ybete.

Tho Troilus gan sorwfully to syke,
Lest she be wrooth, him thoughte his herte deyde;
And seyde: Alas! upon my sorwes syke
Have mercy, swete herte myn, Criseyde!
And if that, in tho wordes that I seyde,
Be any wrong, I wol no more trespase;
Do what yow list, I am al in your grace.

And she answerde: Of gilt misericorde!
That is to seyne, that I foryeve al this;
And evermore on this night yow recorde,
And beth wel war ye do no more amis.
Nay, dere herte myn, quod he, ywis.
And now, quod she, that I have do yow smerte,
foryeve it me, myn owene swete herte.

This Troilus, with blisse of that supprised,
Put al in Goddes hond, as he that mente
Nothing but wel; and, sodeynly avysed,
He hir in armes faste to him hente.
And Pandarus, with a ful good entente,
Leyde him to slepe, and seyde: If ye ben wyse,
Swowneth not now, lest more folk aryse.

What mighte or may the sely larke seye,
Whan that the sparhawk hath it in his foot?
I can no more, but of thise ilke tweye,
To whom this tale suere be or soot,
Though that I tarie a yeer, somtyme I moot,
After myn auctor, tellen hir gladnesse,
As wel as I have told hir hevynesse.

Criseyde, which that felte hir thus ytake,
As writen clerkes in hir bokes olde,
Right as an aspe lef she gan to quake,
Whan she him felte hir in his armes folde.
But Troilus, al hool of cares colde,
Gan thanken tho the blisful goddes sevne;
Thus sondry peynes bringen folk to hevne.

This Troilus in armes gan hir streyne,
And seyde: O swete, as ever mote I goon,
Now be ye caught, now is ther but we tweyne;
Now yeldeth yow, for other boot is noon.
To that Criseyde answerde thus anon:
Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte dere,
Ben yolde, ywis, I were now not here!

O! sooth is seyde, that heled for to be
As of a fevre or othere greet syknesse,
Men moste drinke, as men may often see,
ful bittre drink; and for to han gladnesse,
Men drinken often peyne and greet distresse;
I mene it here, as for this aventure,
That thorough a peyne hath founden al his cure.

And now swetnesse semeth more swete,
That bitternesse assayed was biforn;
for out of wo in blisse now they flete.
Non swich they felten, sith they were born;
Now is this bet, than bothe two be lorn!
for love of God, take every womman hede
To werken thus, if it comth to the nede.

Criseyde, al quit from every drede and tene,
As she that juste cause hadde him to triste,
Made him swich feste, it joye was to sene,
Whan she his trouthe and clene entente wiste.
And as aboute a tree, with many a twiste,
Bitrent and wryth the sote wode binde,
Gan ech of hem in armes other winde.

And as the newe abaysshed nightingale,
That stineth first whan she biginneth singe,
Whan that she hereth any herde tale,
Or in the heggas any wight steringe,
And after siker dooth hir voys outringe;
Right so Criseyde, whan hir drede stente,
Opned hir herte, and tolde him hir entente.

And right as he that seeth his deeth yshapen,
And deye moot, in ought that he may gesse,
And sodeynly rescous doth him escapen,
And from his deeth is brought in sikernesse,
for al this world, in swich present gladnesse,
Was Troilus, and hath his lady swete;
With worse hap God lat us never mete!

Hir armes smale, hir streyghte bak and softe,
Hir sydes longe, fleschly, smothe, and whyte,
He gan to stroke, and good thrift bad ful ofte;
Hir snowish throte, hir brestes rounde and lyte;
Thus in this hevne he gan him to delyte,
And therewithal a thousand tyme hir kiste;
That, what to done, for joye unnethe he wiste.

Than seyde he thus: O, Love, O, Charitee,
Thy moder eek, Citherea the swete,
After thyself next heried be she,
Venus mene I, the welwilly planete;
And next that, Imeneus, I thee grete;
for never man was to yow goddes holde
As I, which ye han brought fro cares colde.

Benigne Love, thou holy bond of thinges,
Whoso wol grace, and list thee nought honoure,
Lo, his desyr wol fle withouten winges,
for, noldestow of bountee hem socouren
That serven best and most alwey labouren,
Yet were al lost, that dar I wel seyn, certes,
But if thy grace passed our desertes.

And for thou me, that coude leest deserve
Of hem that nombred been unto thy grace,
Hast holpen, ther I lykly was to sterve,
And me bistowed in so heygh a place
That thilke boundes may no blisse pace,
I can no more, but laude and reverence
Be to thy bounte and thyn excellence!

And therewithal Criseyde anon he kiste,
Of which, certeyn, she felte no disese,
And thus seyde he: Now wolde God I wiste,
Myn herte swete, how I yow mighte plesse!
What man, quod he, was ever thus at ese
As I, on whiche the faireste and the beste
That ever I say, deyneth hir herte reste.

Here may men seen that mercy passeth right;
The experience of that is felt in me,
That am unworthy to so swete a wight.
But herte myn, of your benignitee,
So thenketh, though that I unworthy be,
Yet mot I nede amenden in som wyse,
Right though the vertu of your heyghthe servyse.

And for the love of God, my lady dere,
Sin God hath wrought me for I shal yow serve,
As thus I mene, that ye wol be my sterve,
To do me live, if that yow liste, or sterve,
So techeth me how that I may deserve
Your thank, so that I, thurgh myn ignoraunce,
Ne do nothing that yow be displeaunce.

For certes, fresshe wommanliche wyf,
This dar I seye, that trouthe and diligence,
That shal ye finden in me al my lyf,
Ne I wol not, certeyn, breken your defence;
And if I do, present or in absence,
for love of God, lat slee me with the dede,
If that it lyke unto your womanhede.

Ywis, quod she, myn owne hertes list,
My ground of ese, and al myn herte dere,
Graunt mercy, for on that is al my trist;
But late us falle away fro this matere;
for it suffyseth, this that seyde is here.
And at o word, withouten repentaunce,
Welcome, my knight, my pees, my suffisaunce!

Of hir delyt, or joyes oon the leste
Were impossible to my wit to seye;
But juggeth, ye that han ben at the feste
Of swich gladnesse, if that hem liste pleye!
I can no more, but thus thise ilke tweye
That night, betwixen drede and sikernesse,
felten in love the grete worthinesse.

O blisful night, of hem so longe ysought,
How blithe unto hem bothe two thou were!
Why ne hadde I swich on with my soule ybought,
Ye, or the leste joye that was there?
Awey, thou foule daunger and thou fere,
And lat hem in this hevne blisse dwelle,
That is so heygh, that al ne can I telle!

But sooth is, though I can not tellen al,
As can myn auctor, of his excellence,
Yet have I seyde, and, God to for, I shal
In every thing al hoolly his sentence.
And if that I, at loves reverence,
Have any word in ech for the beste,
Doth therewithal right as yourselven leste.

for myne wordes, here and every part,
I speke hem alle under correccioun
Of yow, that feling han in loves art,
And putte it al in your discrecioun
To encrease or maken diminucioun
Of my langage, and that I yow biseche;
But now to purpos of my rather speche.

Thise ilke two, that ben in armes laft,
So looth to hem asonder goon it were,
That ech from other wende been biraft,
Orelles, lo, this was hir moste fere,
That al this thing but nyce dremes were;
for which ful ofte ech of hem seyde: O swete,
Clippe ich yow thus, or elles I it mete?

And, Lord! so he gan goodly on hir see,
That never his look ne bleynte from hir face,
And seyde: O dere herte, may it be
That it be sooth, that ye ben in this place?
Ye, herte myn, God thank I of his grace!
Quod tho Criseyde, and therewithal him kiste,
That where his spirit was, for joye he niste.

This Troilus ful ofte hir eyen two
Gan for to kisse, and seyde: O eyen clere,
It were ye that wroughte me swich wo,
Ye humble nettes of my lady dere!
Though ther be mercy writen in your chere,
God wot, the text ful hard is, sooth, to finde,
How coude ye withouten bond me binde?

Therwith he gan hir faste in armes take,
And wel an hundred tymes gan he syke,
Nought swiche sorwful sykes as men make
for wo, or elles whan that folk ben syke,
But esy sykes, swiche as been to lyke,
That shewed his affeccioun withinne;
Of swiche sykes coude he nought bilinne.

Sone after this they speke of sondry thinges,
As fil to purpos of this aventure,
And pleyinge entrechaungen hir ringes,
Of which I can nought tellen no scripture;
But wel I woot a broche, gold and asure,
In whiche a ruby set was lyk an herte,
Criseyde him yaf, and stak it on his sherte.

Lord! trowe ye, a coveitous, a wrecche,
That blameth love and holt of it despyt,
That, of tho pens that he can mokre and kecche,
Was ever yet yeye him swich delyt,
As is in love, in oo poynt, in som plyt?
Nay, doutelees, for also God me save,
So parfit joye may no nigard have!

They wol sey Yis, but Lord! so that they lye,
Tho bisy wrecches, ful of wo and drede!
They callen love a woodnesse or folye,
But it shal falle hem as I shal yow rede;
They shul forgo the whyte and eek the rede,
And live in wo, ther God yewe hem mischaunce,
And every lover in his trouthe avaunce!

As wolde God, tho wrecches, that dispyse
Servyse of love, hadde eres also longe
As hadde Myda, ful of coveityse;
And therto dronken hadde as hoot and stronge
As Crassus dide for his affectis wronge,
To techen hem that they ben in the vyce,
And loveres nought, although they holde hem nyce!

Thise ilke two, of whom that I yow seye,
Whan that hir hertes wel assured were,
Tho gonne they to speken and to pleye,
And eek rehercen how, and whanne, and where,
They knewe hem first, and every wo and fere
That passed was; but al swich hevynesse,
I thanke it God, was tourned to gladnesse.

And evermo, whan that hem fel to speke
Of any thing of swich a tyme agoon,
With kissing al that tale sholde breke,
And fallen in a newe joye anon,
And diden al hir might, sin they were oon,
for to recoveren blisse and been at ese,
And passed wo with joye countrepeyse.

Reson wil not that I now speke of sleep,
for it accordeth nought to my matere;
God woot, they toke of that ful litel keep,
But lest this night, that was to hem so dere,
Ne sholde in veyn escape in no manere,
It was biset in joye and bisinesse
Of al that souneth into gentillesse.

But whan the cok, comune astrologer,
Gan on his brest to bete, and after crowe,
And Lucifer, the dayes messenger,
Gan for to ryse, and out hir bemes throwe;
And estward roos, to him that coude it knowe,
fortuna major, than anon Criseyde,
With herte sore, to Troilus thus seyde:

Myn hertes lyf, my trist and my plesaunce,
That I was born, alas! what me is wo,
That day of us mot make desseveraunce!
for tyme it is to ryse, and hennes go,
Or elles I am lost for evermo!
O night, alas! why niltow over us hove,
As longe as whanne Almene lay by Jove?

O blake night, as folk in bokes rede,
That shapen art by God this world to hyde
At certeyn tymes with thy derke wede,
That under that men mighte in reste abyde,
Wel oughte bestes pleyne, and folk thee chyde,
That thereas day with labour wolde us breste,
That thou thus fleest, & deynest us nought treste!

Thou dost, alas! to shortly thyn offyce,
Thou rakel night, ther God, makere of kinde,
Thee, for thyn hast and thyn unkinde vyce,
So faste ay to our hemispere binde,
That nevermore under the ground thou winde!
for now, for thou so hyst out of Troye,
Have I forgon thus hastily my joye!

¶ This Troilus, that with tho wordes fette,
As thoughte him tho, for pietous distresse,
The bloody teres from his herte melte,
As he that never yet swich hevynesse
Assayed hadde, out of so greet gladnesse,
Gan therewithal Criseyde his lady dere
In armes streyne, and seyde in this manere:

O cruel day, accusour of the joye
That night and love han stole and faste ywryen,
Acursed be thy coming into Troye,
for every bore hath oon of thy bright yen!
Envyous day, what list thee so to spyen?
What hastow lost, why sekestow this place,
Ther God thy lyght so quenche, for his grace?

Alas! what han thise lovers thee agilt,
Dispitous day? thyn be the pyne of helle!
for many a love hastow shent, and wilt;
Thy pouring in wol nowher lete hem dwelle.
What profrestow thy light here for to selle?
Go selle it hem that smale seles graven,
We wol thee nought, us nedeth no day haven.

¶ And eek the sonne Tytan gan he chyde,
And seyde: O fool, wel may men thee dyspise,
That hast the Dawing al night by thy syde,
And suffrest hir so sone up fro thee ryse,
for to disesen lovers in this wyse.
What! hold your bed ther, thou, & eek thy Morn!
I bidde God, so yeve yow bothe sorwe!

¶ Therwith ful sore he sighte, & thus he seyde:
My lady right, and of my wele or wo
The welle and rote, O goodly myn, Criseyde,
And shal I ryse, alas! and shal I go?
Now fele I that myn herte moot atwo!
for how sholde I my lyf an houre save,
Sin that with yow is al the lyf I have?

What shal I doon, for certes, I not how,
Ne whanne, alas! I shal the tyme see,
That in this plyt I may be eft with yow;
And of my lyf, God woot, how that shal be,
Sin that desyr right now so byteth me,
That I am deed anon, but I retourne,
How sholde I longe, alas! fro yow sojourne?

But natheless, myn owene lady bright,
Yit were it so that I wiste outrely,
That I, your humble servaunt and your knight,
Were in your herte set so fermely
As ye in myn, the which thing, trewely,
Me lever were than thise worldes tweyne,
Yet sholde I bet enduren al my peyne.

¶ To that Criseyde answerde right anon,
And with a syk she seyde: O herte dere,
The game, ywis, so ferforth now is goon,
The first shal Phebus falle fro his spere,
And every egle been the dowves fere,
And every roche out of his place sterte,
Er Troilus out of Criseydes herte!

Ye be so depe inwith myn herte grave,
That, though I wolde it turne out of my thought,
As wisly verray God my soule save,
To dyen in the peyne, I coude nought!
And, for the love of God that us hath wrought,
Lat in your brayn non other fantasie
So crepe, that it cause me to dye!

And that ye me wolde han as faste in minde
As I have yow, that wolde I yow biseche;
And, if I wiste soothly that to finde,
God mighte not a poynt my joyes eche!
But, herte myn, withoute more speche,
Beth to me trewe, or elles were it routhe;
for I am thyn, by God and by my trouthe!

Beth glad forthy, and live in sikernes;
Thus seyde I never er this, ne shal to mo;
And if to yow it were a gret gladnesse
To turne ayein, soone after that ye go,
As fayn wolde I as ye, it were so,
As wisly God myn herte bringe at reate!
¶ And him in armes took, and ofte keste.

Agayns his wil, sin it mot nedes be,
This Troilus up roos, and faste him cledde,
And in his armes took his lady free
An hundred tyme, and on his wey him spedde,
And with swich wordes as his herte bledde,
He seyde: farewel, my dere herte swete,
Ther God us graunte sounde and sone to mete!

¶ To which no word for sorwe she answerde,
So sore gan his parting hir destreyne;
And Troilus unto his palays ferde,
As woo bigon as she was, sooth to seyne;
So hard him wrong of sharp desyr the peyne
for to ben eft there he was in plesaunce,
That it may never out of his remembraunce.

Retorned to his real palais, sone
He softe into his bed gan for to slinke,
To slepe longe, as he was wont to done,
But al for nought; he may wel ligge and winke,
But sleep ne may ther in his herte sinke;
Thenkinge how she, for whom desyr him brende,
A thousand fold was worth more than he wende.

And in his thought gan up and down to winde
Hir wordes alle, and every contenaunce,
And fermely impressen in his minde
The leste poynt that to him was plesaunce;
And verrayliche, of thilke remembraunce,
Desyr al newe him brende, and lust to brede
Gan more than erst, and yet took he non hede.

Criseyde also, right in the same wyse,
Of Troilus gan in hir herte shette
his worthinesse, his lust, his dedes wyse,
his gentillesse, and how she with him mette,
Thonkinge love he so wel hir bisette;
Desyryng eft to have hir herte dere
In swich a plyt, she dorste make him chere.

Pandare, amorwe which that comen was
Unto his nece, and gan hir fayre grete,
seyde: Al this night so reyned it, alas!
That al my drede is that ye, nece swete,
han litel layser had to slepe and mete;
Al night, quod he, hath reyn so do me wake,
That som of us, I trowe, hir hedes ake.

¶ And ner he com, and seyde: How stont it now
This mery morwe, nece, how can ye fare?
Criseyde answerde: Never the bet for yow,
for that ye been, God yeve your herte care!
God helpe me so, ye caused al this fare,
Trow I, quod she, for alle your wordes whyte;
O! whoso seeth yow knoweth yow ful lyte!

¶ With that she gan hir face for to wrye
With the shete, and wex for shame al reed;
And Pandarus gan under for to pryde,
And seyde: Nece, if that I shal ben deed,
have here a swerd, and smyteth of myn heed.
¶ With that his arm al sodeynly he thriste
Under hir nekke, and at the laste hir kiste.

I passe al that which chargeth nought to seye,
What! God foryaf his deeth, and she also
foryaf, and with hir uncle gan to pleye,
for other cause was ther noon than so.
But of this thing right to the effect to go,
Whan tyme was, hom til hir hous she wente,
And Pandarus hath fully his entente.

Now torne we ayein to Troilus,
That resteles ful longe abedde lay,
And prevely sente after Pandarus,
To him to come in al the haste he may.
He com anon, nought ones seyde he Nay,
And Troilus ful sobrelly he grette,
And down upon his beddes syde him sette.

This Troilus, with al the affecciuon
Of frendes love that herte may devyse,
To Pandarus on knees fil adoun,
And er that he wolde of the place aryse,
He gan him thonken in his beste wyse;
A hondred sythe he gan the tyme blesse,
That he was born to bringe him fro distresse.

He seyde: O frend, of frendes the alderbeste
That ever was, the sothe for to telle,
Thou hast in hevne ybrought my soule at reste
fro flegiton, the fery flood of helle;
That, though I mighte a thousand tymes selle,
Upon a day, my lyf in thy servyse,
It mighte nought a mote in that suffyse.

The sonne, which that al the world may see,
Saw never yet, my lyf, that dar I leye,
So inly fair and goodly as is she,
Whos I am al, and shal, til that I deye;
And, that I thus am hires, dar I seye,
That thanked be the heighe worthinesse
Of love, and eek thy kinde bisinesse.

Thus hastow me no litel thing yryve,
fo which to thee obliged be for ay
My lyf, and why? for thorough thyn help I live;
for elles deed hadde I be many a day.
¶ And with that word down in his bed he lay,
And Pandarus ful sobrelly him herde
Til al was seyde, and thanne he him answerde:

My dere frend, if I have doon for thee
In any cas, God wot, it is me leef;
And am as glad as man may of it be,
God help me so; but tak now not agreef
That I shal seyn, be war of this myscheef,
That, thereas thou now brought art into blisse,
That thou thyself ne cause it nought to misse.

for of fortunes sharp adversitee
The worst kinde of infortune is this,
A man to have ben in prosperitee,
And it remembren, whan it passed is.
Thou art wys ynough, forthy do nought amis;
Be not to rakel, though thou sitte warme,
for if thou be, certeyn, it wol thee harme.

Thou art at ese, and holde thee wel therinne.
for also seur as reed is every fyr,
As greet a craft is kepe wel as winne;
Brydle alwey wel thy speche and thy desyr.
for worldly joye halt not but by a wyr;
That preveth wel, it brest alday so ofte;
forthy nede is to werke with it softe.

¶ Quod Troilus: I hope, and God tofor,
My dere frend, that I shal so me bere,
That in my gilt ther shal no thing be lorn,
Ne I nil not rake as for to greven here;
It nedeth not this matere ofte tere;
for wistestow myn herte wel, Pandare,
God woot, of this thou woldest litel care.

¶ Tho gan he telle him of his glade night.
And wherof first his herte dredde, and how,
And seyde: freend, as I am trewe knight,
And by that feyth I shal to God and yow,
I hadde it never half so hote as now;
And ay the more that desyr me byteth
To love hir best, the more it me delyteth.

I noot myself not wisly what it is;
But now I fele a newe qualitee,
Ye, al another than I dide er this.
¶ Pandare answerde, and seyde thus, that he
That ones may in hevne blisse be,
He feleth other weyes, dar I leye,
Than thilke tyme he first herde of it seye.

This is o word for al; this Troilus
Was never ful, to speke of this matere,
And for to preysen unto Pandarus
The bountee of his righte lady dere,
And Pandarus to thanke and maken chere.
This tale ay was spannewe to biginne
Til that the night departed hem atwinne.

Sone after this, for that fortune it wolde,
Icomen was the blisful tyme swete,
That Troilus was warned that he sholde,
Ther he was erst, Criseyde his lady mete;
for which he felte his herte in joye flete;
And feythfully gan alle the goddes herie;
And lat see now if that he can be merie.

And holden was the forme and al the wyse,
Of hir cominge, and eek of his also,
As it was erst, which nedeth nought devyse.
But playnly to the effect right for to go,
In joye and seurte Pandarus hem two
Abedde broughte, whan hem bothe leste,
And thus they ben in quiete and in reste.

Nought nedeth it to yow, sin they ben met,
To aske at me if that they blythe were;
for if it erst was wel, tho was it bet
A thousandfold, this nedeth not enquire.
Agon was every sorwe and every fere;
And bothe, ywis, they hadde, and so they wende,
As muche joye as herte may comprede.

This is no litel thing of for to seye,
This passeth every wit for to devyse;
for eche of hem gan othres lust obeye;
felicitee, which that thise clerkes wyse
Commenden so, ne may not here suffyse.
This joye may not writen been with inke,
This passeth al that herte may bithinke.

But cruel day, so welaway the stounde!
Gan for to aproche, as they by signes knewe,
for whiche hem thoughte felen dethe wounde;
So wo was hem, that changen gan hir hewe,
And day they gonnen to dispyse al newe,
Calling it traytour, envyous, and worse,
And bitterly the dayes light they curse.

¶ Quod Troilus: Atlas! now am I war
That Pirous and tho swifte stedes three,
Whiche that drawen forth the sonnes char,
Han goon som bypath in despyt of me;
That maketh it so sone day to be;
And, for the sonne him hasteth thus to ryse,
Ne shal I never doon him sacrificyse!

But nede day departe moste hem sone,
And whanne hir speche doon was and hir chere,
They twinne anon as they were wont to done,
And setten tyme of meting eft yfere;
And many a night they wroughte in this manere.
And thus fortune a tyme ladde in joye
Criseyde, and eek this kinges sone of Troye.

In suffisaunce, in blisse, and in singinges,
This Troilus gan al his lyf to lede;
He spendeth, justeth, maketh festeynges;
He yeveth frely ofte, and chaungeth wede,
And held aboute him alwey, out of drede,
A world of folk, as cam him wel of kinde,
The freshest and the beste he coude fynde;

That swich a voys was of hym and a stevene
Thorougout the world, of honour and largesse,
That it up rong unto the yate of hevne.
And, as in love, he was in swich gladnesse,
That in his herte he demede, as I gesse,
That there nis lovener in this world at ese
So wel as he, and thus gan love him plesse.

The godlihedde or beautee which that kinde
In any other lady hadde yset
Can not the mountaunce of a knot unbinde,
Aboute his herte, of al Criseydes net.
He was so narwe ymasked and yknet,
That it undon on any manere syde,
That nil not been, for ought that may betyde.

And by the hond ful ofte he wolde take
This Pandarus, and into gardin lede,
And swich a feste and swich a proces make
Him of Criseyde, and of hir womanhede,
And of hir beautee, that, withouten drede,
It was an hevne his wordes for to here;
And thanne he wolde singe in this manere.

¶ Love, that of erthe and see hath governaunce,
Love, that his hestes hath in hevne hye,
Love, that with an holsom alliaunce
Halt peples joyned, as him lest hem gye,
Love, that knetteth lawe of companye,
And couples doth in vertu for to dwelle,
Bind this acord, that I have told and telle;

That that the world with feyth, which that is
stable,
Dyverseth so his stoundes concordinge,
That elements that been so discordable
Holden a bond perpetuely duringe,
That Phebus mote his rosy day forth bringe,
And that the mone hath lordship over the
nighes,
Al this doth Love; ay heried be his mightes!

That that the see, that gredy is to flowen,
Constreyneth to a certeyn ende so
his flodes, that so fersly they ne growen
To drenchen erthe and al for evermo;
And if that Love ought lete his brydel go,
Al that now loveth asonder sholde lepe,
And lost were al, that Love halt now tohepe.

So wolde God, that auctor is of kinde,
That, with his bond, Love of his vertu liste
To cerlen hertes alle, and faste binde,
That from his bond no wight the wey out wiste.
And hertes colde, hem wolde I that he twiste
To make hem love, and that hem leste ay rewe
On hertes sore, and kepe hem that ben trewe.

¶ In alle nedes, for the tounes werre,
He was, and ay the firste in armes dight;
And certeynly, but if that bokes erre,
Save Ector, most ydrad of any wight;
And this encrees of hardinesse and might
Cam him of love, his ladies thank to winne,
That altered his spirit so withinne.

In tyme of trewe, on haukinge wolde he ryde,
Or elles huntten boor, bere, or lyoun;
The smale bestes leet he gon bisyde.

And whan that he com rydinge into toun,
ful ofte his lady, from hir window doun,
As fresh as faucon comen out of muwe,
ful redy was, him goodly to saluwe.

And most of love and vertu was his speche,
And in despyt hadde alle wrecchednesse;
And doutelees, no nede was him biseche
To honouren hem that hadde worthinesse,
And esen hem that weren in distresse.
And glad was he if any wight wel ferde,
That lover was, whan he it wiste or herde.

for sooth to seyn, he lost held every wight
But if he were in loves heigh servyse,
I mene folk that oughte it been of right.
And over al this, so wel coude he devyse
Of sentement, and in so unouth wyse
Al his array, that every lover thoughte,
That al was wel, whatso he seyde or wroughte.

And though that he be come of blood royal,
him liste of pryde at no wight for to chase;
Benigne he was to ech in general,
for which he gat him thank in every place.
Thus wolde Love, yheried be his grace,
That Pryde, Envy, Ire, and Avaryce
He gan to flee, and every other vyce.

Thou lady bright, the daughter to Dione,
Thy blinde and winged sone eek, daun Cypyde;
Ye sustren nyne eek, that by Elicone
In hil Parnaso listen for to abyde,
That ye thus fer han deyned me to gyde,
I can no more, but sin that ye wol wende,
Ye heried been for ay, withouten ende!

Thourgh yow have I seyde fully in my song
Theffect and joye of Troilus servyse,
Al be that ther was som disese among,
As to myn auctor listeth to devyse.
My thridd book now ende ich in this wyse;
And Troilus in luste and in quiete
Is with Criseyde, his owne herte swete.

Explicit Liber Tercius.



TROILUS AND CRISEYDE. LIBER QUARTUS.

Prohemium Libri Quarti.



AL TO LITEL, MEYLAMEY the whyte,
Lasteth swich joye, ythanked be fortune!
That semeth trewest, whan she wol bygyle,
And can to foles so hir song entune,
That she hem hent & blent, traytour comune;
And whan a wight is from hir wheel ythrowe,

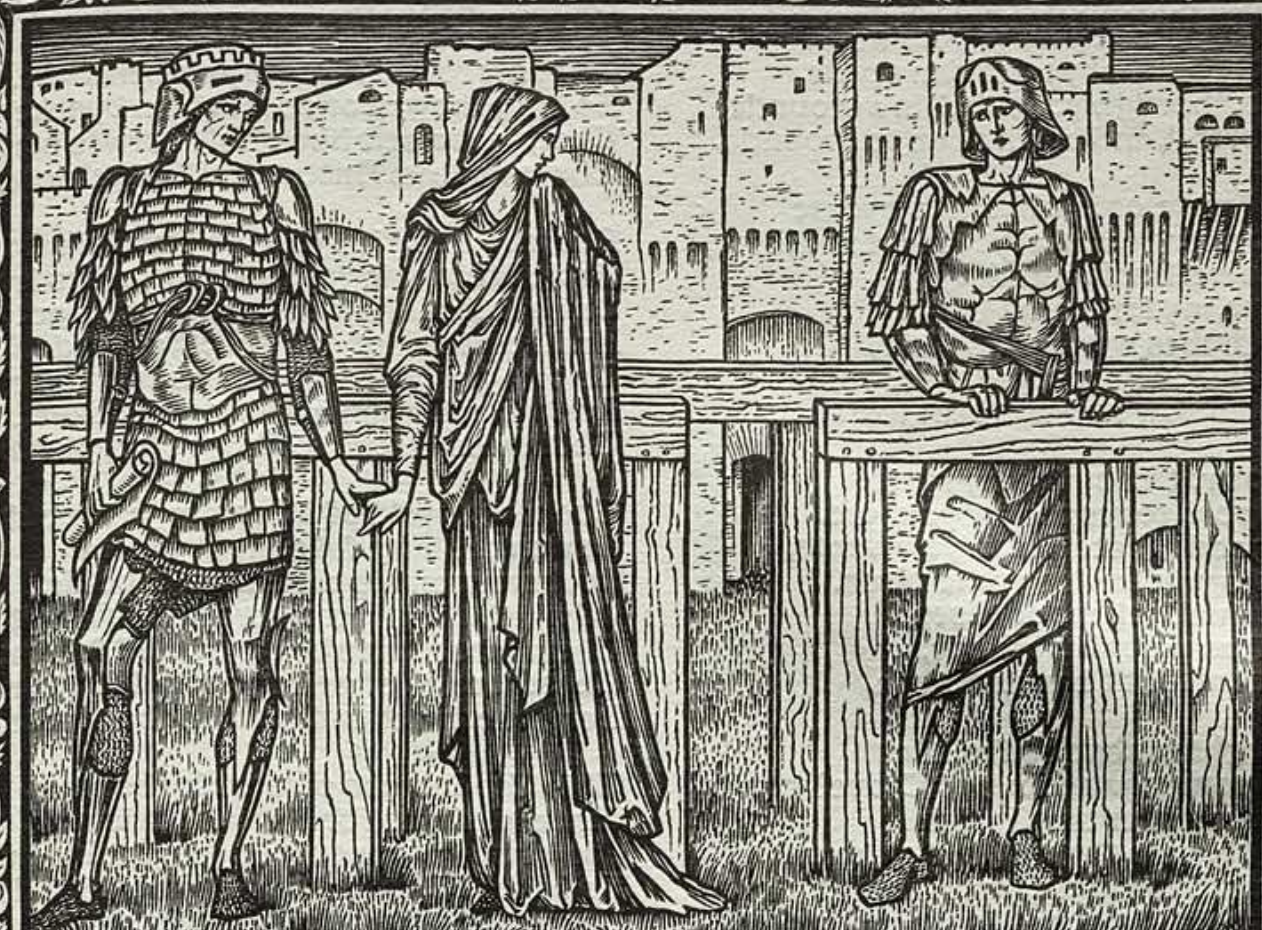
Than laugheth she, & maketh him the mowe.

from Troilus she gan hir brighte face
Awey to wrythe, and took of him non hede,
But caste him clene oute of his lady grace,
And on hir wheel she sette up Diomedes;
for which right now myn herte ginneth blede,
And now my penne, alas! with which I wryte,
Quaketh for drede of that I moot endyte.

for how Criseyde Troilus forsook,
Or at the leste, how that she was unkinde,
Mot hennesforth ben matere of my booke,
As wryten folk thorough which it is in minde.
Alas! that they shulde ever cause finde
To speke hir harm; and if they on hir lye,
Ywis, hemself sholde han the vilanye.

O ye herines, Nightes doughtren three,
That endelees compleynen ever in pyne,
Megera, Alete, and eek Thesiphone;
Thou cruel Mars eek, fader to Quiryne,
This ilke ferthe booke me helpeth fynde,
So that the los of lyf and love yfere
Of Troilus be fully shewed here.

Explicit Prohemium.



Incipit Quartus Liber.

BIGGINGE in ost, as I
have seyde er this,
The Grekes stronge,
aboute Troye toun,
Bifel that, whan that
Phebus shynynge is
Upon the brest of Her-
cules Lyoun,
That Ector, with ful
many a bold baroun,
Caste on a day with Grekes for to fighte,
As he was wont to greve hem what he myghte.

Not I how longe or short it was bitwene
This purpos and that day they fighte mente;
But on a day wel armed, bright and shene,
Ector, and many a worthy wight out wente,
With spere in hond and bigge bowes bente;
And in the berd, withoute lenger lette,
Hir fomen in the feld anon hem mette.

The longe day, with speres sharpe ygrounde,
With arwes, dartes, swerdes, maces felle,
They fighte and bringen hors and man to
grounde,
And with hir axes out the braynes quelle.

But in the laste shour, sooth for to telle,
The folk of Troye hemselven so misledden,
That with the worse at night homward they
fledden.

At whiche day was taken Antenor,
Maugre Polydamas or Monesteo,
Santippe, Sarpedon, Polynestor,
Polyte, or eek the Troian daun Ripheo,
And othere lasse folk, as Phebusco.
So that, for harm, that day the folk of Troye
Dredde to lese a greet part of hir joye.

Of Pryamus was yve, at Greek requeste,
A tyme of trewe, and tho they gonnen trete,
Hir prisoner to chaungen, moste and leste,
And for the surplus yeven sommes grete.
This thing anon was couth in every strete,
Bothe in thassege, in toun, and everywhere,
And with the firste it cam to Calkas ere.

Whan Calkas knew this tretis sholde holde,
In consistorie, among the Grekes, sone
He gan in thringe forth, with lordes olde,
And sette him thereas he was wont to done;
And with a chaunged face hem bad a bone,
for love of God, to don that reverence,

To stinte noyse, and yewe him audience.

Thanne seyde he thus: Lo! lordes myne, I was
Troian, as it is knowen out of drede;
And if that yow remembre, I am Calkas,
That alderfirst yaf comfort to your nede,
And tolde wel how that ye sholden spede.
for dredelees, thorough yow, shal, in a stounde,
Ben Troye ybrend, and beten down to grounde.

And in what forme, or in what maner wyse
This town to shende, and al your lust to acheve,
Ye han er this wel herd it me devyse;
This knowe ye, my lordes, as I leve.
And for the Grekes weren me so leve,
I com myself in my propre persone,
To teche in this how yow was best to done;

Haveinge unto my tresour ne my rente
Right no resport, to respect of your ese.
Thus al my good I loste and to yow wente,
Wening in this you, lordes, for to plesce.
But al that los ne doth me no disese.
I vouchesauf, as wisly have I joye,
for you to lese al that I have in Troye,

Save of a doughter, that I laste, alas!
Slepinge at hoom, whanne out of Troye I sterte.
O sterne, O cruel fader that I was!
How mighte I have in that so hard an herte?
Alas! I ne hadde ybrought hir in hir sherte!
for sorwe of which I wol not live to morwe,
But if ye lordes rewe upon my sorwe.

for, by that cause I say no tyme er now
Hir to delivere, I holden have my pees;
But now or never, if that it lyke yow,
I may hir have right sone, doutelees.
O help and grace! amonges al this prees,
Rewe on this olde caitif in destresse,
Sin I through yow have al this hevinesse!

Ye have now caught and fetered in prisoun
Troians ynowe; and if your willes be,
My child with oon may have redempcioun.
Now for the love of God and of bountee,
Oon of so fele, alas! so yewe him me.
What nede were it this preyere for to werne,
Sin ye shul bothe han folk and toun as yerne?

On peril of my lyf, I shal not lye,
Appollo hath me told it feithfully;
I have eek founde it by astronomye,
By sort, and by augurie eek trewely,
And dar wel seye, the tyme is faste by,
That fyr and flaumbe on al the toun shal sprede;
And thus shal Troye turne in asshen dede.

for certeyn, Phebus and Neptunus bothe,
That makeden the walles of the toun,
Ben with the folk of Troye alwey so wrothe,
That thei wol bringe it to confusioun,
Right in despyt of king Lameadoun.

Bycause he nolde payen hem hir hyre,
The toun of Troye shal ben set on fyre.

Telling his tale alwey, this olde greye,
Humble in speche, and in his lokinge eke,
The salte teres from his eyen tweye
ful faste ronnen down by eyther cheke.
So longe he gan of socour hem byseke
That, for to hele him of his sorwes sore,
They yave him Antenor, withoute more.

But who was glad ynough but Calkas tho?
And of this thing ful sone his nedes leyde
On hem that sholden for the tretis go,
And hem for Antenor ful ofte preyde
To bringen hoom king Coas and Criseyde;
And whan Pryam his savegarde sente,
Thembassadours to Troye streyght they wente.

The cause ytold of hir cominge, the olde
Pryam the king ful sone in general
Let hereupon his parlement to holde,
Of which the effect rehersen yow I shal.
Thembassadours ben answered for fynal,
Theschaunge of prisoners and al this nede
hem lyketh wel, and forth in they procede.

This Troilus was present in the place,
Whan axed was for Antenor Criseyde,
for which ful sone chaungen gan his face,
As he that with tho wordes wel neigh deyde.
But natheles, he no word to it seyde,
Lest men sholde his affecioun espye;
With mannes herte he gan his sorwes drye.

And ful of anguish and of grisly drede
Abood what lordes wolde unto it seye;
And if they wolde graunte, as God forbede,
Theschaunge of hir, than thoughte he thinges
tweye,
first, how to save hir honour, and what weye
he mighte best theschaunge of hir withstonde;
ful faste he caste how al this mighte stonde.

Love him made al prest to doon hir byde,
And rather dye than she sholde go;
But resoun seyde him, on that other syde:
Withoute assent of hir ne do not so,
Lest for thy werk she wolde be thy fo,
And seyn, that thorough thy medling is yblow
Your bother love, there it was erst unknowe.

for which he gan deliberen, for the beste,
That though the lordes wolde that she wente,
He wolde late hem graunte what hem leste,
And telle his lady first what that they mente.
And whan that she had seyde him hir entente,
Therafter wolde he werken also blyve,
Though al the world ayein it wolde stryve.

Ector, which that wel the Grekes herde,
for Antenor how they wolde han Criseyde,
Gan it withstonde, and sobrelly answerde:

Sires, she nis no prisoner, he seyde;
Inoot on yow who that this charge leyde,
But, on my part, ye may eftsone him telle,
We usen here no wommen for to selle.

The noyse of peple upstirte thanne at ones,
As breme as blase of straw yset on fyre;
for infortune it wolde, for the nones,
They sholden hir confusioun desyre.
Ector, quod they, what goost may yow
enspyre,
This womman thus to shilde and doon us lese
Daun Antenor? a wrong wey now ye chese,

That is so wys, and eek so bold baroun,
And we han nede of folk, as men may see;
he is eek oon, the grettest of this toun;
O Ector, lat tho fantasies be!
O king Pryam, quod they, thus seggen we,
That al our voys is to forgon Criseyde;
And to deliveren Antenor they preyde.

O Juvenal, lord! trewe is thy sentence,
That litel witen folk what is to yerne
That they ne finde in hir desyr offence;
for cloud of errour lat hem not descerne
What best is; and lo, here ensample as yerne.
This folk desiren now deliveraunce
Of Antenor, that broughte hem to mischaunce!

for he was after traytour to the toun
Of Troye; alas! they quitte him out to rathe;
O nyce world, lo, thy discrecioun!
Criseyde, which that never dide hem skathe,
shal now no lenger in hir blisse bathe;
But Antenor, he shal com hoom to toun,
And she shal out; thus seyden here and howne.

for which delibered was by parlement,
for Antenor to yelden up Criseyde,
And it pronounced by the president,
Altheigh that Ector Nay ful ofte preyde.
And fynaly, what wight that it withseyde,
It was for nought, it moste been, and sholde;
for substaunce of the parlement it wolde.

Departed out of parlement echone,
This Troilus, withoute wordes mo,
Unto his chaumbre spedde him faste allone,
But if it were a man of his or two,
The whiche he bad out faste for to go,
Bycause he wolde slepen, as he seyde,
And hastely upon his bed him leyde.

And as in winter leves been biraft,
Eche after other, til the tree be bare,
So that ther nis but bark and braunche ylaft,
Lyth Troilus, biraft of ech welfare,
Ybouden in the blake bark of care,
Disposed wood out of his wit to breyde,
So sore him sat the chaunginge of Criseyde.

Herist him up, and every dore he shette

And windowe eek, and tho this sorweful man
Upon his beddes syde adoun him sette,
ful lyk a deed image pale and wan;
And in his brest the heped wo bigan
Outbreste, and he to werken in this wyse
In his woodnesse, as I shal yow devyse.

Right as the wilde bole biginneth springe
Now here, now there, ydarted to the herte,
And of his deeth roreth in compleynge,
Right so gan he aboute the chaumbre sterte,
Smyting his brest ay with his festes smerte;
His heed to the wal, his body to the grounde
ful ofte he swapte, himselven to confounde.

His eyen two, for pitee of his herte,
Out stremeden as swifte welles tweye;
The heighe sobbes of his sorwes smerte
his speche him rafte, unnethes mighte he seye:
O deeth, alas! why niltow do me deye?
Hursed be the day which that nature
Shoop me to ben a lyves creature!

But after, whan the furie and the rage
Which that his herte twist and faste threste,
By lengthe of tyme somewhat gan asswage,
Upon his bed he leyde him down to reste;
But tho bigonne his teres more outbreste,
That wonder is, the body may suffyse
To half this wo, which that I yow devyse.

Than seyde he thus: fortune! alas the whyle!
What have I doon, what have I thus agilt?
How mightestow for reuthe me bigyle?
Is ther no grace, and shal I thus be spilt?
Shal thus Criseyde awey, for that thou wilt?
Alas! how maystow in thyn herte finde
To been to me thus cruel and unkinde?

Have I thee nought honoured al my lyve,
As thou wel wost, above the goddes alle?
Why wiltow me fro joye thus depryve?
O Troilus, what may men now thee calle
But wrecche of wrecches, out of honour falle
Into miserie, in which I wol biwayle
Criseyde, alas! til that the breeth me fayle?

Alas, fortune! if that my lyf in joye
Displees hadde unto thy foule envye,
Why ne haddestow my fader, king of Troye,
Byraft the lyf, or doon my bretheren dye,
Or slayn myself, that thus compleyne and crye,
I, combre/world, that may of nothing serve,
But ever dye, and never fully sterve?

If that Criseyde allone were me laft,
Nought roughte I whider thou woldest me
stere;
And hir, alas! than hastow me biraft.
But evermore, lo! this is thy manere,
To reve a wight that most is to him dere,
To preve in that thy gerful violence,
Thus am I lost, ther helpeth no defence!

O verray Lord of love, O God, alas!
That knowest best myn herte and al my thought,
What shal my sorwful lyf don in this cas
If I forgo that I so dere have bought?
Sin ye Criseyde and me han fully brought
Into your grace, and bothe our hertes seled,
How may ye suffre, alas! it be repeled?

What I may doon, I shal, whyl I may dure
On lyve in torment and in cruel peyne,
This infortune or this disaventure,
Allone as I was born, ywis, compleyne;
Ne never wil I seen it shyne or reyne;
But ende I wil, as Edippe, in derknesse
My sorwful lyf, and dyen in distresse.

O very goost, that errest to and fro,
Why niltow fleen out of the wofulleste
Body, that ever mighte on grounde go?
O soule, lurking in this wo, unneste,
flee forth out of myn herte, and lat it breste,
And folwe alwey Criseyde, thy lady dere;
Thy righte place is now no lenger here!

O wofulle eyen two, sin your disport
Was al to seen Criseydes eyen brighte,
What shal ye doon but, for my discomfort,
Stonden for nought, and wepen out your sighte?
Sin she is queynt, that wont was yow to lighte,
In weyn fro this forth have I eyen tweye
Yformed, sin your vertue is aweye.

O my Criseyde, O lady sovereyne
Of thilke woful soule that thus cryeth,
Who shal now yeven comfort to my peyne?
Allas, no wight; but when myn herte dyeth,
My spirit, which that so unto yow hyeth,
Receyve in gree, for that shal ay yow serve;
forthy no fors is, though the body sterve.

O ye lovers, that heighe upon the wheel
Ben set of fortune, in good aventure,
God leve that ye finde ay love of steel,
And longe mot your lyf in joye endure!
But whan ye comen by my sepulture,
Remembreth that your felawe resteth there;
for I lovede eek, though I unworthy were.

O olde unholsom and mistyved man,
Calkas I mene, alas! what eyleth thee
To been a Greek, sin thou art born Troian?
O Calkas, which that wilt my bane be,
In cursed tyme was thou born for me!
As wolde blisful Jove, for his joye,
That I thee hadde, where I wolde, in Troye!

A thousand sykes, hottere than the glede,
Out of his brest ech after other wente,
Medled with pleyntes newe, his wo to fede,
for which his woful teres never stente;
And shortly, so his peynes him torente,
And wex so mat, that joye nor penaunce
He feleth noon, but lyth forth in a traunce.

Pandare, which that in the parlement
Hadde herd what every lord and burgeys seyde,
And how ful graunted was, by oon assent,
for Antenor to yelden so Criseyde,
Gan wel neigh wood out of his wit to breyde,
So that, for wo, he niste what he mente;
But in a rees to Troilus he wente.

A certeyn knight, that for the tyme kepte
The chaumbre dore, undide it him anon;
And Pandare, that ful tendrelliche wepte,
Into the derke chaumbre, as stille as stoon,
Toward the bed gan softly to goon,
So confus, that he niste what to seye;
for verray wo his wit was neigh aweye.

And with his chere and loking al to torn,
for sorwe of this, and with his armes folden,
He stood this woful Troilus biforn,
And on his pitous face he gan biholden;
But Lord, so often gan his herte colden,
Seing his freend in wo, whos hevinesse
His herte slow, as thoughte him, for distresse.

This woful wight, this Troilus, that felte
His freend Pandare ycomen him to see,
Gan as the snow ayein the sonne melte,
for which this sorwful Pandare, of pitee,
Gan for to wepe as tendrelliche as he;
And specheles thus been this ilke tweye,
That neyther mighte o word for sorwe seye.

But at the laste this woful Troilus,
Ney deed for smert, gan bresten out to rore,
And with a sorwful noyse he seyde thus,
Among his sobbes and his sykes sore:
Lo! Pandare, I am deed, withouten more.
Hastow nought herd at parlement, he seyde,
for Antenor how lost is my Criseyde?

This Pandarus, ful deed and pale of hewe,
ful pitously answerde and seyde: Yis!
As wisly were it fals as it is trewe,
That I have herd, and wot al how it is.
O mercy, God, who wolde have trowed this?
Who wolde have wend that, in so litel a throwe,
fortune our joye wolde han overthrowe?

for in this world ther is no creature,
As to my doom, that ever saw ruyn
Straungere than this, thorough cas or aventure.
But who may al eschewe or al devyne?
Swich is this world; forthy I thus defyne,
Ne trust no wight to finden in fortune
Ay propretee; hir yettes been comune.

But tel me this, why thou art now so mad
To sorwen thus? Why lystow in this wyse,
Sin thy desyr al holly hastow had,
So that, by right, it oughte ynow suffyse?
But I, that never felte in my servyse
A frendly chere or loking of an ye,
Lat me thus wepe and wayle, til I dye.

And over al this, as thou wel most thyselfe,
This town is ful of ladies al aboute;
And, to my doom, fairer than swiche twelve
As ever she was, shal I finde, in som route,
Ye, oon or two, withouten any doute.
Forthy be glad, myn owene dere brother,
If she be lost, we shul recovere another.

What, God forbede alwey that ech plesaunce
In o thing were, and in non other wight!
If oon can singe, another can wel daunce;
If this be goodly, she is glad and light;
And this is fayr, and that can good aright.
Ech for his vertu holden is for dere,
Bothe heroner and faucon for riverse.

And eek, as writ Zanzis, that was ful wys:
The newe love out chaceth ofte the olde;
And upon newe cas lyth newe avys.
Therk eek, thyself to saven artow holde;
Swich fyr, by proces, shal of kinde colde.
for sin it is but casuel plesaunce,
Som cas shal putte it out of remembraunce.

for also seur as day cometh after night,
The newe love, labour or other wo,
Or elles selde seinge of a wight,
Don olde affectiouns alle overgo.
And, for thy part, thou shalt have oon of tho
To abrigge with thy bittre peynes smerte;
Absence of hir shal dryve hir out of herte.

Thise wordes seyde he for the nones alle,
To helpe his freend, lest he for sorwe deyde,
for douteles, to doon his wo to falle,
He roughte not what unthrif that he seyde.
But Troilus, that neigh for sorwe deyde,
Tok litel hede of al that ever he mente;
Oon ere it herde, at the other out it wente:

But at the laste answerde and seyde: freend,
This lechecraft, or heled thus to be,
Were wel sitting, if that I were a feend,
To traisen hir that trewe is unto me!
I pray God, lat this consayl never ythee;
But do me rather sterve anon right here
Er I thus do as thou me woldest lere.

She that I serve, ywis, what so thou seye,
To whom myn herte enhabit is by right,
Shal han me holly hires til that I deye.
for, Pandarus, sin I have trouthe hir hight,
I wol not been untrew for no wight;
But as hir man I wol ay live and sterve,
And never other creature serve.

And ther thou seyst, thou shalt as faire finde
As she, lat be, make no comparisoun
To creature yformed here by kinde.
O leve Pandare, in conclusioun,
I wol not be of thyn opinioun,
Touching al this; for whiche I thee biseche,
So hold thy pees; thou sleest me with thy speche.

Thow biddest me I sholde love another
Al freshly newe, and lat Criseyde go!
It lyth not in my power, leve brother.
And though I mighte, I wolde not do so.
But canstow pleyen raket, to and fro,
Netle in, dokke out, now this, now that, Pandare?
Now foule falle hir, for thy wo that care!

Thow farest eek by me, thou Pandarus,
As he, that whan a wight is wo bigoon,
He cometh to him a pas, and seyth right thus:
Therk not on smert, and thou shalt fele noon.
Thou most me first transmuwen in a stoon,
And reve me my passiounes alle,
Er thou so lightly do my wo to falle.

The deeth may wel out of my brest departe
The lyf, so longe may this sorwe myne;
But fro my soule shal Criseydes darte
Out nevermo; but down with Proserpyne,
Whan I am deed, I wol go wone in pyne;
And ther I wol eternally compleyne
My wo, and how that twinned be we tweyne.

Thow hast here maad an argument, for fyn,
How that it sholde lasse peyne be
Criseyde to forgoon, for she was myn,
And live in ese and in felicitye.
Why gabbestow, that seydest thus to me
That him is wors that is fro wele ythrowe,
Than he hadde erst non of that wele yknowe?

But tel me now, sin that thee thinketh so light
To chaungen so in love, ay to and fro,
Why hastow not don bisily thy might
To chaungen hir that doth thee al thy wo?
Why niltow lete hir fro thyn herte go?
Why niltow love another lady swete,
That may thyn herte setten in quiete?

If thou hast had in love ay yet mischaunce,
And canst it not out of thyn herte dryve,
I, that livede in lust and in plesaunce
With hir as muche as creature onlyve,
How sholde I that foryete, and that so blyve?
O where hastow ben hid so longe in muwe,
That canst so wel and formely arguwe?

Nay, nay, God wot, nought worth is al thy reed,
for which, for what that ever may bifalle,
Withouten wordes mo, I wol be deed.
O deeth, that endere art of sorwes alle,
Com now, sin I so ofte after thee calle;
for sely is that deeth, soth for to seyne,
That, ofte ycleped, cometh and endeth peyne.

Wel wot I, whyl my lyf was in quiete,
Er thou me slowe, I wolde have yeven hyre;
But now thy cominge is to me so swete,
That in this world I nothing so desyre.
O deeth, sin with this sorwe I am afyre,
Thou outhur do me anon in teres drenche,
Or with thy colde strook myn hete quenche!

Sin that thou sleest so fele in sondry wyse
Hyens hir wil, unpreyed, day and night,
Do me, at my requeste, this servyse,
Delivere now the world, so dostow right,
Of me, that am the wofulleste wight
That ever was; for tyme is that I sterve,
Sin in this world of right nought may I serve.

¶ This Troilus in teres gan distille,
As licour out of alambyk ful faste;
And Pandarus gan holde his tunge stille,
And to the ground his eyen down he caste.
But nathelees, thus thoughte he at the laste:
What, parde, rather than my felawe deye,
Yet shal I somewhat more unto him seye.

And seyde: freend, sin thou hast swich distresse,
And sin thee list myn arguments to blame,
Why nilt thyselfen helpen doon redresse,
And with thy manhod letten al this grame?
Go ravishe hir ne canstow not for shame!
And outhir lat hir out of toun fare,
Or hold hir stille, and leve thy nyce fare.

Artow in Troye, and hast non hardiment
To take a womman which that loveth thee,
And wolde herselfen been of thyn assent?
Now is not this a nyce vanitee?
Rys up anon, and lat this weping be,
And kyth thou art a man, for in this houre
I wil be deed, or she shal bleven oure.

¶ To this answerde him Troilus ful softe,
And seyde: Parde, leve brother dere,
At this have I myself yet thought ful ofte,
And more thing than thou devysest here.
But why this thing is laft, thou shalt wel here;
And whan thou me hast yve an audience,
Therafter mayst thou telle at thy sentence.

First, sin thou wost this toun hath al this werre
For ravisshing of wommen so by might,
It sholde not be suffred me to erre,
As it stant now, ne doon so gret unright.
I sholde han also blame of every wight,
My fadres graunt if that I so withstode,
Sin she is chaunged for the tounes goode.

I have eek thought, so it were hir assent,
To aske hir at my fader, of his grace;
Than thenke I, this were hir accusament,
Sin wel I woot I may hir not purchase.
For sin my fader, in so heigh a place
As parlement, hath hir eschaunge enseled,
He nil for me his lettre be repeled.

Yet drede I most hir herte to pertourbe
With violence, if I do swich a game;
For if I wolde it openly distourbe,
It moste been disclaundre to hir name.
And me were lever deed than hir defame,
As nolde God but if I sholde have
Hir honour lever than my lyf to save!

Thus am I lost, for ought that I can see;
For certeyn is, sin that I am hir knight,
I moste hir honour levere han than me
In every cas, as love oughte of right.
Thus am I with desyr and reson twight;
Desyr for to distourben hir me redeth,
And reson nil not, so myn herte dredeth.

¶ Thus weping that he coude never cesse,
He seyde: Alas! how shal I, wrecche, fare?
For wel fele I alwey my love encesse,
And hope is lasse and lasse alwey, Pandare!
Encessen eek the causes of my care;
So welawey, why nil myn herte breste?
For, as in love, ther is but litel reste.

¶ Pandare answerde: freend, thou mayst, for me,
Don as thee list; but hadde ich it so hote,
And thyn estat, she sholde go with me;
Though al this toun cryede on this thing by note,
I nolde sette at al that noyse a grote,
For when men han wel cryed, than wol they roun;
A wonder last but nyne night never in toun.

Devyne not in reson ay so depe
Ne curteisly, but help thyself anon;
Bet is that othere than thyselfen wepe,
And namely, sin ye two been al con.
Rys up, for by myn heed, she shal not goon;
And rather be in blame a lyte yfounde
Than sterve here as a gnat, withoute wounde.

It is no shame unto yow, ne no vyce
Hir to withholden, that ye loveth most.
Paraunter, she mighte holden thee for nyce
To lete hir go thus to the Grekes ost.
Thenk eek fortune, as wel thyselfen wost,
Helpeth an hardy man to his emprise,
And weyveth wrecches, for hir cowardyse.

And though thy lady wolde a litel hir greve,
Thou shalt thy pees ful wel hereafter make,
But as for me, certayn, I can not leve
That she wolde it as now for yvel take.
Why sholde than for ferd thyn herte quake?
Thenk eek how Paris hath, that is thy brother,
A love; and why shaltow not have another?

And Troilus, o thing I dar thee swere,
That if Criseyde, whiche that is thy leef,
Now loveth thee as wel as thou dost here,
God helpe me so, she nil not take agreef.
Though thou do bote anon in this mischeef.
And if she wilneth fro thee for to passe,
Thanne is she fals; so love hir wel the lasse.

forthi tak herte, and thenk, right as a knight,
Thourgh love is broken alday every lawe,
Kyth now sumwhat thy corage and thy might,
Have mercy on thyself, for any awe.
Lat not this wrecched wo thin herte gnawe,
But manly set the world on sixe and seven;
And, if thou deye a martir, go to hevене.

I wol myself be with thee at this dede,
Though ich and al my kin, upon a stounde,
Shulle in a strete as dogges ligen dede,
Thourgh girt with many a wyd & bloody wounde.
In every cas I wol a freend be founde.
And if thee list here sterven as a wrecche,
Adieu, the devel spede him that it recche!

¶ This Troilus gan with tho wordes quiken,
And seyde: freend, graunt mercy, ich assente;
But certaynly thou mayst not me so priken,
Ne peyne noon ne may me so tormente,
That, for no cas, it is not myn entente,
At shorte wordes, though I dyen sholde,
To ravishe hir, but if himself it wolde.

¶ Why, so mene I, quod Pandarus, al this day,
But tel me than, hastow hir wel assayed,
That sorwest thus? And he answerde: Nay.
¶ Wherof artow, quod Pandare, than amayed,
That not not that she wol ben yvel apayed
To ravishe hir, sin thou hast not ben there,
But if that Jove tolde it in thyn ere?

forthi rys up, as nought ne were, anon,
And wash thy face, and to the king thou wende,
Or he may wondren whider thou art goon.
Thou most with wisdom him and othere blende;
Or, upon cas, he may after thee sende
Er thou be war; and shortly, brother dere,
Be glad, and lat me werke in this matere.

for I shal shape it so, that sikerly
Thou shalt this night som tyme, in som manere,
Com speke with thy lady prevely,
And by hir wordes eek, and by hir chere,
Thou shalt ful sone aparceyve and wel here
Al hir entente, and in this cas the beste;
And fare now wel, for in this point I reste.

¶ The swifte fame, whiche that false thinges
Egal reporteth lyk the thinges trewe,
Was thoroughout Troye yfled with preste winges
fro man to man, and made this tale al newe,
How Calkas doughter, with hir brighte hewe,
At parlement, withoute wordes more,
Igraunted was in chaunge of Antenore.

The whiche tale anon right as Criseyde
Had herd, she which that of hir fader roughte,
As in this cas, right nought, ne whanne he deyde,
ful bisily to Juppiter bisoughte
Yve him mischaunce that this tretis broughte.
But shortly, lest this tale sothe were,
She dorste at no wight asken it, for fere.

As she that hadde hir herte and al hir minde
On Troilus yset so wonder faste,
That al this world ne mighte hir love unbinde,
Ne Troilus out of hir herte caste;
She wol ben his, whyl that hir lyf may laste.
And thus she brenneth bothe in love and drede,
So that she niste what was best to rede.

But as men seen in toun, and al aboute,
That wommen usen frendes to visyte,
So to Criseyde of wommen com a route
for pitous joye, and wenden hir delyte;
And with hir tales, dere ynough a myte,
These wommen, whiche that in the cite dwelle,
They sette hem down, and seyde as I shal telle.

Quod first that oon: I am glad, trewely,
Bycause of yow, that shal your fader see.
¶ Another seyde: Ywis, so nam not I;
for al to litel hath she with us be.
¶ Quod tho the thridde: I hope, ywis, that she
Shal bringen us the pees on every syde,
That, whan she gooth, almighty God hir gyde!

¶ Tho wordes and tho wommannisse thinges,
She herde hem right as though she thennes were;
for, God it wot, hir herte on other thing is,
Although the body sat among hem there.
Hir advertence is alwey elleswhere;
for Troilus ful faste hir soule soughte;
Withouten word, alwey on him she thoughte.

Thise wommen, that thus wenden hir to plesse,
Aboute nought gonne alle hir tales spende;
Swich vanitee ne can don hir non ese,
As she that, al this mene while, brende
Of other passioun than that they wende,
So that she felte almost hir herte dye
for wo, and wery of that companye.

for which no lenger mighte she restreyne
Hir teres, so they gonnen up to welle,
That yeven signes of the bitter peyne
In whiche hir spirit was, and moste dwelle;
Remembring hir, fro heven unto which helle
She fallen was, sith she forgoth the sighte
Of Troilus, and sorowfully she sighte.

And thilke foles sittinge hir aboute
Wenden, that she so wepte and syked sore
Bycause that she sholde out of that route
Depart, and never pleye with hem more.
And they that hadde yknowen hir of yore
Seye hir so wepe, and thoughte it kindenesse,
And eche of hem wepte eek for hir distresse;

And bisily they gonnen hir conforten
Of thing, God wot, on which she litel thoughte;
And with hir tales wenden hir disporten,
And to be glad they often hir bisoughte.
But swich an ese therwith they hir wroughte
Right as a man is esed for to fele,
for ache of heed, to clawen him on his hele!

But after al this nyce vanitee
They took hir leve, and boon they wenten alle.
Criseyde, ful of sorweful pitee,
Into hir chaumbre up wente out of the halle,
And on hir bed she gan for deed to falle,
In purpos never thennes for to ryse;
And thus she wroughte, as I shal yow devyse.

Hir ounded heer, that sonnish was of hewe,
She rente, and eek hir fingres longe and smale
She wrong ful ofte, and bad God on hir rewe,
And with the deeth to doon bote on hir bale.
Hir hewe, whylom bright, that tho was pale,
Bar witness of hir wo and hir constreynte;
And thus she spak, sobbinge, in hir compleynte:

Alas! quod she, out of this region
I woful wrecche and infortuned wight,
And born in corsed constellacioun,
Mot goon, and thus departen fro my knight;
Wo worth, alas! that ilke dayes light
On which I saw him first with eyen tweyne,
That causeth me, and I him, al this peyne!

Therwith the teres from hir eyen two
Doun fille, as shour in Aperl, ful swythe;
Hir whyte brest she bet, and for the wo
After the deeth she cryed a thousand aythe,
Sin he that wont hir wo was for to lythe,
She mot forgoon; for which disaventure
She held herself a forlost creature.

She seyde: How shal he doon, and I also?
How sholde I live, if that I from him twinne?
O dere herte eek, that I love so,
Who shal that sorwe sleen that ye ben inne?
O Calkas, fader, thyn be al this sinne!
O moder myn, that cleped were Argyve,
Wo worth that day that thou me bere on lyve!

To what fyn sholde I live and sorwen thus?
How sholde a fish withoute water dure?
What is Criseyde worth, from Troilus?
How sholde a plaunte or lyves creature
Live, withoute his kinde noriture?
for which ful oft a byword here I seye,
That, Rotelees, mot grene sone deye.

I shal don thus, sin neither swerd ne darte
Dar I non handle, for the crueltee,
That ilke day that I from yow departe,
If sorwe of that nil not my bane be,
Than shal no mete or drinke come in me
Til I my soule out of my breste unshethe;
And thus myselven wol I do to dethe.

And, Troilus, my clothes everichoon
Shul blake been, in tokeninge, herte swete,
That I am as out of this world agoon,
That wont was yow to setten in quiete;
And of myn ordre, ay til deeth me mete,
The observaunce ever, in your absence,
Shal sorwe been, compleynte, and abstinence.

Myn herte and eek the woful goost therinne
Biquethe I, with your spirit to compleyne
Eternally, for they shul never twinne.
for though in erthe ytwinne be we tweyne,
Yet in the feld of pitee, out of peyne,
That hight Elysos, shul we been yfere,
As Orpheus and Erudice his fere.

Thus herte myn, for Antenor, alas!
I sone shal be chaunged, as I wene.
But how shul ye don in this sorwful cas,
How shal your tendre herte this sustene?
But herte myn, foryet this sorwe and tene,
And me also; for, soothly for to seye,
So ye wel fare, I recche not to deye.

How mighte it ever yred ben or ysonge,
The pleynte that she made in hir distresse?
I noot; but, as for me, my litel tonge,
If I discreven wolde hir hevynesse,
It sholde make hir sorwe seme lesse
Than that it was, and childishly deface
Hir heigh compleynte, and therefore I it pace.

Pandare, which that sent from Troilus
Was to Criseyde, as ye han herd devyse,
That for the beste it was accorded thus,
And he ful glad to doon him that servyse,
Unto Criseyde, in a ful secree wyse,
Theras she lay in torment and in rage,
Com hir to telle al booly his message.

And fond that she herselfen gan to trete
ful pitously; for with hir salte teres
Hir brest, hir face ybathed was ful wete;
The mighty tresses of hir sonnish heres,
Unbroyden, hangen al aboute hir eres;
Which yaf him verray signal of martyre
Of deeth, which that hir herte gan desyre.

Whan she him saw, she gan for sorwe anon
Hir tery face atwice hir armes hyde,
for which this Pandare is so wo bigoon,
That in the hous he mighte unnethe abyde,
As he that pitee felte on every syde,
for if Criseyde hadde erst compleyned sore,
Tho gan she pleyne a thousand tymes more.

And in hir aspre pleynte than she seyde:
Pandare first of joyes mo than two
Was cause causinge unto me, Criseyde,
That now transmewed been in cruel wo.
Wher shal I seye to yow Wel come or no,
That alderfirst me broughte into servyse
Of love, alas! that endeth in swich wyse?

Endeth than love in wo? Ye, or men lyeth!
And alle worldly blisse, as thinketh me,
The ende of blisse ay sorwe it occupyeth;
And whoso troweth not that it so be,
Lat him upon me, woful wrecche, ysee,
That myself hate, and ay my birthe acorse,
feling alwey, fro wikke I go to worse.

Whoso me seeth, he seeth sorwe al at ones,
Peine, torment, pleynte, wo, distresse.
Out of my woful body harm ther noon is,
As anguish, langour, cruel bitternesse,
Anoy, smert, drede, fury, and eek siknesse.
I trowe, ywis, from hevne teres reyne,
for pitee of myn aspre and cruel peyne!

And thou, my suster, ful of discomfort,
Quod Pandarus, what thenkestow to do?
Why ne hastow to thyselfen som resport,
Why woltow thus thyselfe, alas, fordo?
Leef al this werk and tak now hede to
That I shal seyn, and herkne, of good entente,
This, which by me thy Troilus thee sente.

Torned hir tho Criseyde, a wo makinge
So greet that it a deeth was for to see:
Alas! quod she, what wordes may ye bringe?
What wol my dere herte seyn to me,
Which that I drede nevermo to see?
Wel he have pleynte or teres, er I wende?
I have ynowe, if he thereafter sende!

She was right swich to seen in hir visage
As is that wight that men on bere binde;
His face, lyk of Paradys the image,
Was al ychaunged in another kinde.
The pleye, the laughtre men was wont to finde
In hir, and eek hir joyes everychone,
Ben fled, and thus lyth now Criseyde allone.

Aboute hir eyen two a purple ring
Bitrent, in sothfast tokninge of hir peyne,
That to biholde it was a dedly thing,
for which Pandare mighte not restreyne
The teres from his eyen for to reyne.
But natheles, as he best mighte, he seyde
from Troilus these wordes to Criseyde:

Lo, nece, I trowe ye han herd al how
The king, with othere lordes, for the beste,
Hath mad eschaunge of Antenor and yow,
That cause is of this sorwe and this unreste.
But how this cas doth Troilus moleste,
That may non erthely mannes tonge seye;
for verray wo his wit is al aweye.

for which we han so sorwed, he and I,
That into litel bothe it hadde us slawe;
But thurgh my conseil this day, fynally,
he somewhat is fro weping now withdrawe.
And semeth me that he desyreth fawe
With yow to been al night, for to devyse
Remede in this, if ther were any wyse.

This, short and pleyne, the effect of my message,
As ferforth as my wit can comprehend.
for ye, that been of torment in swich rage,
May to no long prologe as now entende;
And herupon ye may answer him sende.
And, for the love of God, my nece dere,
So leef this wo er Troilus be here.

Gret is my wo, quod she, and sighte sore,
As she that feleth dedly sharp distresse;
But yet to me his sorwe is muchel more,
That love him bet than he himself, I gesse.
Alas! for me hath he swich hevynesse?
Can he for me so pitously compleyne?
Ywis, this sorwe doubleth al my peyne.

Grevous to me, God wot, is for to twinne,
Quod she, but yet it hardere is to me
To seen that sorwe which that he is inne;
for wel wot I, it wol my bane be;
And deye I wol in certayn, tho quod she;
But bidde him come, er deeth, that thus me threteth,
Dryve out that goost, which in myn herte beteth.

These wordes seyde, she on hir armes two
fil gruf, and gan to wepe pitously.
Quod Pandarus: Alas! why do ye so,
Syn wel ye wot the tyme is faste by,
That he shal come? Arys up hastily,
That he yow nat biwopen thus ne finde,
But ye wol han him wood out of his minde!

for wiste he that ye ferde in this manere,
He wolde himselfe slee; and if I wende
To han this fare, he sholde not come here
for al the good that Dryam may despense.
for to what fyn he wolde anon pretende,
That knowe I wel; and forthy yet I seye,
So leef this sorwe, or platly he wol deye.

And shapeth yow his sorwe for to abregge,
And nought encresse, leve nece swete;
Beth rather to him cause of flat than egge,
And with som wysdom ye his sorwes bete.
What helpeth it to wepen ful a strete,
Or though ye bothe in salte teres dreynete?
Bet is a tyme of cure ay than of pleynte.

I mene thus; whan I him hider bringe,
Sin ye ben wyse, and bothe of oon assent,
So shapeth how distourbe your goinge,
Or come ayen, sone after ye be went.
Whommen ben wyse in short avysement;
And lat sen how your wit shal now avayle;
And what that I may helpe, it shal not fayle.

Go, quod Criseyde, and uncle, trewely,
I shal don al my might, me to restreyne
from weping in his sight, and bisily,
him for to glade, I shal don al my peyne,
And in myn herte seken every veyne;
If to this soor ther may be founden salve,
It shal not lakken, certain, on myn halve.

Goth Pandarus, and Troilus he soughte,
Til in a temple he fond him al allone,
As he that of his lyf no lenger roughte;
But to the pitouse goddess everichone
ful tendrely he preyde, and made his mone,
To doon him sone out of this world to pace;
for wel he thoughte ther was non other grace.

And shortly, al the sothe for to seye,
He was so fallen in despeyr that day,
That outrely he shoop him for to deye.
for right thus was his argument alwey:
He seyde, he nas but loren, waylawey!
for al that comth, comth by necessitee;
Thus to be lorn, it is my destinee.

for certaynly, this wot I wel, he seyde,
That foresight of divyne purveyaunce
Hath seyn alwey me to forgon Criseyde,
Sin God seeth every thing, out of doutaunce,
And hem desponeth, thorough his ordenaunce,
In hir merytes sothly for to be,
As they shul comen by predestinee.

But natheless, alas! whom shal I leve?
for ther ben grete clerkes many oon,
That destinee thorough argumentes preve;
And som men seyn that nedely ther is noon;
But that free choys is yeven us everichoon.
O, welaway! so slewe arn clerkes olde,
That I not whos opinion I may holde.

for som men seyn, if God seth al biforn,
Ne God may not deceyved ben, pardee,
Than moot it fallen, though men hadde it sworn,
That purveyaunce hath seyn bifore to be.
Wherfor I seye, that from eterne if he
Hath wist biforn our thought eek as our dede,
We have no free choys, as these clerkes rede.

for other thought nor other dede also
Might never be, but swich as purveyaunce,
Which may not ben deceyved nevermo,
Hath feled biforn, withouten ignoraunce.
for if ther mighte been a variaunce
To wrythen out fro Goddes purveyinge,
There nere no prescience of thing cominge;

But it were rather an opinioun
Uncerteyn, and no stedfast forseinge;
And certes, that were an abusoun,
That God shuld han no parfit cleer witinge
More than we men that han doutous weninge.
But swich an errour upon God to gesse
Were fals and foul, and wikked corsednesse.

Eek this is an opinioun of somme
That han hir top ful heighe and smothe yshore;
They seyn right thus, that thing is not to come
for that the prescience hath seyn bifore
That it shal come; but they seyn, that therfore
That it shal come, therfore the purveyaunce
Wot it biforn withouten ignoraunce;

And in this manere this necessitee
Retorneth in his part contrarie agayn.
for needfully bihoveth it not to be
That thilke thinges fallen in certayn
That ben purveyed; but nedely, as they seyn,
Bihoveth it that thinges, whiche that falle,
That they in certayn ben purveyed alle.

I mene as though I laboured me in this,
To enqueren which thing cause of which thing be;
As whether that the prescience of God is
The certayn cause of the necessitee
Of thinges that to comen been, pardee;
Or if necessitee of thing cominge
Be cause certeyn of the purveyinge.

But now ne enforce I me nat in shewing
How the ordre of causes stant; but wel wot I,
That it bihoveth that the bifallinge
Of thinges wist bifore certeynly
Be necessarie, al seme it not therby
That prescience put fallinge necessaire
To thing to come, al falle it foule or faire.

for if ther sit a man yond on a see,
Than by necessitee bihoveth it
That, certes, thyn opinioun soth be,
That wenest or coniectest that he sit;
And fertherover now ayenward yit,
Lo, right so it is of the part contrarie,
As thus; now herkne, for I wol not tarie:

I seye, that if the opinioun of thee
Be sooth, for that he sit, than seye I this,
That he mot sitten by necessitee;
And thus necessitee in either is,
for in him nede of sitting is, ywis,
And in thee nede of sooth; and thus, forsothe,
Ther moot necessitee ben in yow bothe.

But thou mayst seyn, the man sit not therfore,
That thyn opinion of sitting soth is;
But rather, for the man sit ther bifore,
Therfore is thyn opinion sooth, ywis,
And I seye, though the cause of sooth of this
Comth of his sitting, yet necessitee
Is entrechaunged, bothe in him and thee.

Thus on this same wyse, out of doutaunce,
I may wel maken, as it semeth me,
My resoninge of Goddes purveyaunce,
And of the thinges that to comen be;
By whiche reson men may wel ysee,
That thilke thinges that in erthe falle,
That by necessitee they comen alle.

for although that, for thing shal come, ywis,
Therfore is it purveyed, certaynly,
Nat that it comth for it purveyed is:
Yet natheless, bihoveth it nedfully,
That thing to come be purveyed, trewely;
Or elles, thinges that purveyed be,
That they bityden by necessitee.

And this suffyseth right ynow, certeyn,
for to destroye our free choys every del.
But now is this abusoun to seyn,
That fallinge of the thinges temporel
Is cause of Goddes prescience eternel.
Now trewely, that is a fals sentence,
That thing to come sholde cause his prescience.

What mighte I wene, and I hadde swich a thought,
But that God purveyth thing that is to come
for that it is to come, and elles nought?
So mighte I wene that thinges alle and some,
That whylom been bifalle and overcome,
Ben cause of thilke sovereyn purveyaunce,
That forwot al withouten ignoraunce.

And over al this, yet seye I more herto,
That right as when I woot ther is a thing,
Ywis, that thing mot nedefully be so;
Eek right so, when I woot a thing cominge,
So mot it come; and thus the bifalling
Of thinges that ben wist bifore the tyde,
They mowe not been eschewed on no syde.

¶ Than seyde he thus: Almighty Jove in trone,
That woot of al this thing the soothfastnesse,
Rewe on my sorwe, or do me deye sone,
Or bring Criseyde and me fro this distresse.
¶ And whyl he was in al this hevynesse,
Disputinge with himself in this matere,
Com Pandare in, and seyde as ye may here.

¶ O mighty God, quod Pandarus, in trone,
Eyl who seigh ever a wys man faren so?
¶ Why, Troilus, what thenkestow to done?
Hastow swich lust to been thyn owene fo?
¶ What, parde, yet is not Criseyde ago!
¶ Why lust thee so thyself fordoon for drede,
That in thyn heed thyn eyen semen dede?

Hastow not lived many a yeer biforn
Withouten hir, and ferd ful wel at ese?
Artow for hir and for non other born?
Hath kinde thee wroughte alonly hir to plesse?
Lat be, and thenk right thus in thy disese,
That, in the dees right as ther fallen chaunces,
Right so in love, ther come and goon plesaunces.

And yet this is a wonder most of alle,
¶ Why thou thus sorwest, sin thou noot not yit,
Touching hir goinge, how that it shal falle,
Ne if she can herself disturben it.
Thou hast not yet assayed al hir wit.
A man may al by tyme his necke bede
¶ Whan it shal of, and sorwen at the nede.

forthy take hede of that that I shal seye;
I have with hir yspoke and longe ybe,
So as accorded was bitwixe us tweye.
And evermo me thinketh thus, that she
Hath somewhat in hir hertes prevetece,
¶ Wherwith she can, if I shal right arede,
Disturbe al this, of which thou art in drede.

for which my counseil is, whan it is night,
Thou to hir go, and make of this an ende;
And blisful Juno, thorough hir grete mighte,
Shal, as I hope, hir grace unto us sende.
Myn herte seyth, Certeyn, she shal not wende,
And forthy put thyn herte a while in reeste;
And hold this purpos, for it is the beste.

¶ This Troilus answerde, and sighte sore:
Thou seyst right wel, and I wil do right so;
¶ And what him liste, he seyde unto it more.
And whan that it was tyme for to go,
ful prevely himself, withouten mo,
Unto hir com, as he was wont to done;
And how they wroughte, I shal yow telle sone.

Soth is, that whan they gonne first to mete,
So gan the peyne hir hertes for to twiste,
That neither of hem other mighte grete,
But hem in armes toke and after kiste.
The lasse wofulle of hem bothe niste
¶ Wher that he was, ne mighte o word outbringe,
As I seyde erst, for wo and for sobbinge.

Tho woful teres that they leten falle
As bittre weren, out of teres kinde,
for peyne, as is ligne aloes or galle.
So bittre teres weep nought, as I finde,
The woful Myrra through the bark and rinde.
That in this world ther nis so hard an herte,
That nolde han rewed on hir peynes smerte.

But whan hir woful wery gostes tweyne
Retorned been theras hem oughte dwelle,
And that somewhat to wayken gan the peyne
By lengthe of pleynte, and ebben gan the welle
Of hire teres, and the herte unswelle,
¶ With broken voys, al hoors forshright, Criseyde
To Troilus thise ilke wordes seyde:

O Jove, I deye, and mercy I besече!
Help, Troilus! and therewithal hir face
Upon his brest she leyde, and loste speche;
Hir woful spirit from his propre place,
Right with the word, alwey up poynt to pace.
And thus she lyth with hewes pale and grene,
That whylom fresh and fairest was to sene.

This Troilus, that on hir gan biholde,
Clepinge hir name, and she lay as for deed,
Withoute answer, and felte hir limes colde,
Hir eyen throwen upward to hir heed,
This sorwful man can now noon other reed,
But ofte tyme hir colde mouth he kiste;
¶ Wher him was wo, God and himself it wiste!

He rist him up, and long streight he hir leyde;
for signe of lyf, for ought he can or may,
Can he noon finde in nothing on Criseyde,
for which his song ful ofte is Weylaway!
But whan he saugh that specheles she lay,
¶ With sorwful voys, and herte of blisse al bare,
He seyde how she was fro this world yfare!

So after that he longe hadde hir compleyned,
His hondes wronge, and seyde that was to seye,
And with his teres salte hir brest bireyned,
He gan tho teris wpyen of ful dreye,
And pitously gan for the soule preye,
And seyde: O Lord, that set art in thy trone,
Rewe eek on me, for I shal folwe hir sone!

¶ She cold was and withouten sentement,
for aught he woot, for breeth ne felte he noon;
And this was him a preignant argument
That she was forth out of this world agoon;
And whan he seigh ther was non other woon,
He gan hir limes dresse in swich manere
As men don hem that shul be leyd on bere.

And after this, with sterne and cruel herte,
His swerd anon out of his shethe he twichte,
Himself to sleen, how sore that him smerte,
So that his sowle hir sowle folwen mighte;
Theras the doom of Mynos wolde it dighte;
Sin love and cruel fortune it ne wolde,
That in this world he lenger liven sholde.

Thanne seyde he thus, fulfild of heigh desdayn:
O cruel Jove, and thou, fortune adverse,
This al and som, that falsly have ye slayn
Criseyde, and sin ye may do me no werse,
fy on your might and werkes so diverse!
Thus cowardly ye shul me never winne;
Ther shal no deeth me fro my lady twinne.

for I this world, sin ye han slayn hir thus,
Wol lete, and folowe hir spirit lowe or hye;
Shal never lover seyn that Troilus
Dar not, for fere, with his lady dye;
for certeyn, I wol bere hir companye.
But sin ye wol not suffre us liven here,
Yet suffreth that our soules ben yfere.

And thou, citee, whiche that I leve in wo,
And thou, Pryam, and bretheren al yfere,
And thou, my moder, farewell for I go;
And Attropos, make redy thou my bere!
And thou, Criseyde, o swete herte dere,
Receyve now my spirit! wolde he seye,
With swerd at herte, al redy for to deye.

But as God wolde, of swough therwith she
abreyde,
And gan to syke, and Troilus she cryde;
And he answerde: Lady myn Criseyde,
Live ye yet? and leet his swerd down glyde.
Ye, herte myn, that thanked be Cupyde!
Quod she, and therwithal she sore sighte;
And he bigan to glade hir as he mighte;

Took hir in armes two, and kiste hir ofte,
And hir to glade he dide al his entente;
for which hir goost, that flikered ay onlofte,
Into hir woful herte ayein it wente.
But at the laste, as that hir eyen glente
Asyde, anon she gan his swerd aspye,
As it lay bare, and gan for fere crye,

And asked him, why he it hadde outdrawe?
And Troilus anon the cause hir tolde,
And how himself therwith he wolde have slawe,
for which Criseyde upon him gan biholde,
And gan him in hir armes faste folde,
And seyde: O mercy, God, lo, which a dede!
Alas! how neigh we were bothe dede!

Thanne if I ne hadde spoken, as grace was,
Ye wolde han slayn yourself anon? quod she.
Ye, doutelees. And she answerde: Alas!
for, by that ilke Lord that made me,
I nolde a forlong wey onlyve han be,
After your deeth, to han be crowned quene
Of al the lond the sonne on shyneth shene.

But with this selve swerd, which that here is,
Myself I wolde have slayn! quod she tho;
But ho, for we han right ynow of this,
And late us ryse and streight to bedde go,
And there lat us speken of our wo,
for, by the morter which that I see brenne,
Knowe I ful wel that day is not fer henne.

When they were in hir bedde, in armes folde,
Nought was it lyk tho nightes herebiforn;
for pitously ech other gan biholde,
As they that hadden al hir blisse yborn,
Biwaylinge ay the day that they were born.
Til at the last this sorwful wight Criseyde
To Troilus these ilke wordes seyde:

Lo, herte myn, wel wot ye this, quod she,
That if a wight alwey his wo compleyne,
And seketh nought how holpen for to be,
It nis but folye and encres of peyne;
And sin that here assembled be we twayne
To finde bote of wo that we ben inne,
It were al tyme sone to biginne.

I am a womman, as ful wel ye woot,
And as I am avysed sodeynly,
So wol I telle yow, whyl it is hoot,
Me thinketh thus, that neither ye nor I
Oughte half this wo to make skilfully.
for there is art ynow for to redresse
That yet is mis, and sleen this hevynesse.

Sooth is, the wo, the whiche that we ben inne,
for ought I woot, for nothing elles is
But for the cause that we sholden twinne,
Considered al, ther nis no more amis.
But what is thanne a remede unto this,
But that we shape us sone for to mete?
This al and som, my dere herte swete.

Now that I shal wel bringen it aboute
To come ayein, sone after that I go,
Therof am I no maner thing in doute,
for dredeles, withinne a wouke or two,
I shal ben here; and, that it may be so
By alle right, and in a wordes fewe,
I shal yow wel an heap of weyes shewe.

for which I wol not make long sermoun,
for tyme ylost may not recovered be;
But I wol gon to my conclusioun,
And to the beste, in ought that I can see.
And, for the love of God, foryeve it me
If I speke ought ayein your hertes reste;
for trewely, I speke it for the beste;

Makinge alwey a protestacioun,
That now these wordes, whiche that I shal seye,
Nis but to shewe yow my mocoun,
To finde unto our helpe the beste weye;
And taketh it non other wyse, I preye,
for in effect whatso ye me comaunde,
That wol I doon, for that is no demaunde.

Now herkeneth this, ye han wel understonde
My going graunted is by parlement
So ferforth, that it may not be withstonde
for al this world, as by my judgement.
And sin ther helpeth noon aysement
To letten it, lat it passe out of minde;
And lat us shape a bettre wey to finde.

The sothe is, that the twinninge of us twayne
Wol us disece and cruelliche anoye.
But him bihoveth somtyme han a peyne,
That serveth love, if that he wol have joye.
And sin I shal no ferthere out of Troye
Than I may ryde ayein on half a morwe,
It oughte lasse causen us to sorwe.

So as I shal not so ben hid in muwe,
That day by day, myn owene herte dere,
Sin wel ye woot that it is now a truwe,
Yeshul ful wel al myn estat yhere.
And er that truwe is doon, I shal ben here,
And thanne have ye bothe Antenor ywonne
And me also; beth glad now, if ye conne;

And think right thus: Criseyde is now agoon,
But what! she shal come hastily ayein.
And whanne, alas? by God, lo, right anon,
Er dayes ten, this dar I sauffy seyn.
And thanne at erste shul we been so fayn,
So as we shulle togederes ever dwelle,
That al this world ne mighte our blisse telle.

I see that ofte, theras we ben now,
That for the beste, our conseil for to hyde,
Ye speke not with me, nor I with yow
In fourtenight; ne see yow go ne ryde.
May ye not ten dayes thanne abyde,
for myn honour, in swich an aventure?
Ywis, ye mowen elles lite endure!

Ye knowe eek how that al my kin is here,
But if that onliche it my fader be;
And eek myn othere thinges alle yfere,
And nameliche, my dere herte, ye,
Whom that I nolde leven for to see
for al this world, as wyd as it hath space;
Or elles, see ich never Joves face!

Why trowe ye my fader in this wyse
Coveiteth so to see me, but for drede
Lest in this toun that folkes me dispyse
Bycause of him, for his unhappy dede?
What woot my fader what lyf that I lede?
for if he wiste in Troye how wel I fare,
Us neded for my wending nought to care.

Ye seen that every day eek, more and more,
Men trete of pees; and it supposed is,
That men the quene Eleyne shal restore,
And Grekes us restore that is mis.
So though ther nere comfort noon but this,
That men purposen pees on every syde,
Ye may the bettre at ese of herte abyde.

for if that it be pees, myn herte dere,
The nature of the pees mot nedes dryve
That men moste entrecomunen yfere,
And to and fro eek ryde and gon as blyve
Alday as thikke as been flen from an hyve;
And every wight han libertee to bleve
Wheras him list the bet, withouten leve.

And though so be that pees ther may be noon,
Yet hider, though ther never pees ne were,
I moste come; for whider sholde I goon,
Or how mischaunce sholde I dwelle there
Among tho men of armes ever in fere?
for which, as wisly God my soule rede,
I can not seen wherof ye sholden drede.

Have here another wey, if it so be
That al this thing ne may yow not suffyse.
My fader, as ye knowen wel, pardee,
Is old, and elde is ful of coveityse.
And I right now have founden al the gyse,
Withoute net, wherwith I shal him hente;
And herkeneth how, if that ye wole assente.

Lo, Troilus, men seyn that hard it is
The wolf ful, and the wether hool to have;
This is to seyn, that men ful ofte, ywis,
Mot spenden part, the remenaunt for to save.
for ay with gold men may the herte grave
Of him that set is upon coveityse;
And how I mene, I shal it yow devyse.

The moeble which that I have in this toun
Unto my fader shal I take, and seye,
That right for trust and for savacioun
It sent is from a freend of his or tweye,
The whiche freendes ferventliche him preye
To senden after more, and that in hye,
Whyl that this toun stant thus in jupartye.

And that shal been an huge quantitee,
Thus shal I seyn, but, lest it folk aspyde,
This may be sent by no wight but by me;
I shal eek shewen him, if pees bityde,
What frendes that ich have on every syde
Toward the court, to doon the wrathe pace
Of Pryamus, and doon him stonde in grace.

So, what for o thing and for other, swete,
I shal him so enchaunten with my sawes,
That right in hevne his sowle is, shal he mete!
for al Appollo, or his clerkes lawes,
Or calculinge awayleth nought three hawes;
Desyr of gold shal so his sowle blende,
That, as me lyst, I shal wel make an ende.

And if he wolde ought by his sort it preve
If that I lye, in certayn I shal fonde
Distorben him, and plukke him by the sleve,
Makinge his sort, and beren him on honde,
He hath not wel the goddes understonde,
for goddes speken in amphibologies,
And, for a sooth, they tellen twenty lyes.

Eek drede fond first goddes, I suppose,
Thus shal I seyn, and that his cowarde herte
Made him amis the goddes text to glose,
Whan he for ferde out of his Delphos sterte.
And but I make him sone to converte,
And doon my reed withinne a day or tweye,
I wol to yow oblige me to deye.

And troweliche, as writen wel I finde,
That al this thing was seyde of good entente;
And that hir herte trewe was and kinde
Towardes him, and spak right as she mente,
And that she starf for wo neigh, whan she wente,
And was in purpos ever to be trewe;
Thus writen they that of hir werkis knewe.

This Troilus, with herte and eres spradde,
Herde al this thing devyssen to and fro;
And verraylich him semed that he hadde
The selve wit; but yet to lete hir go
His herte misforȝaf him evermo.
But fynally, he gan his herte wreste
To trusten hir, and took it for the beste.

for which the grete furie of his penaunce
Was queynt with hope, and therewith hem bitwene
Bigan for joye the amoureuse daunce.
And as the briddes, whan the sonne is shene,
Delyten in hir song in leves grene,
Right so the wordes that they spake yfere
Delyted hem, and made hir hertes clere.

But natheles, the wending of Criseyde,
for al this world, may nought out of his minde;
for which ful ofte he pitously hir preyde,
That of hir heste he might hir trewe finde.
And seyde hir: Certes, if ye be unkinde,
And but ye come at day set into Troye,
Ne shal I never have hele, honour, ne joye.

for also sooth as sonne uprist on morwe,
And, God! so wisly thou me, woful wrecche,
To reste bringe out of this cruel sorwe,
I wol myselfen slee if that ye drecche.
But of my deeth though litel be to recche,
Yet, er that ye me cause so to smerte,
Dwel rather here, myn owene swete herte!

for trewely, myn owene lady dere,
Tho sleightes yet that I have herd yow sterte
ful shaply been to failen alle yfere.
for thus men seyn: That oon thenketh the bere,
But al another thenketh his ledere,
Your sire is wys, and seyde is, out of drede:
Men may the wyse at renne, and not at rede.

It is ful hard to halten unespyed
Bifore a crepul, for he can the craft;
Your fader is in sleighte as Argus yed;
for al be that his moeble is him biraft,
His olde sleighte is yet so with him laft,
Ye shal not blende him for your womanhede,
Ne feyne aright, and that is al my drede.

I noot if pees shal evermo bityde;
But, pees or no, for ernest ne for game,
I woot, sin Calkas on the Grekes syde
Hath ones been, and lost so foule his name,
He dar no more come here ayein for shame;
for which that weye, for ought I can espye,
To trusten on, nis but a fantasye.

Ye shal eek seen, your fader shal yow glose
To been a wyf, and as he can wel preche,
He shal som Grek so preyse and wel alose,
That ravisschen he shal yow with his speche,
Or do yow doon by force as he shal teche.
And Troilus, of whom ye nil han routhe,
Shal causeles so sterven in his trouthe!

And over al this, your fader shal despyse
Us alle, and seyn this citee nis but lorn;
And that thassege never shal aryse,
for why the Grekes han it alle sworn
Til we be slayn, and down our walles torn.
And thus he shal you with his wordes fere,
That ay drede I, that ye wol bleve there.

Ye shul eek seen so many a lusty knight
Among the Grekes, ful of worthinesse,
And eche of hem with herte, wit, and might
To plesen yow don al his besinesse,
That ye shul dullen of the rudenesse
Of us sely Troianes, but if routhe
Remorde yow, or vertue of your trouthe.

And this to me so grevous is to thinke,
That fro my brest it wol my soule rende;
Ne dredeles, in me ther may not sinke
A good opinioun, if that ye wende;
for why your faderes sleighte wol us shende.
And if ye goon, as I have told yow yore,
So thenk I nam but deed, withoute more.

for which, with humble, trewe, and pitous herte,
A thousand tymes mercy I yow preyde;
So reweth on myn aspre peynes smerte,
And doth somewhat, as that I shal yow seye,
And lat us stele away bitwix us tweye;
And thenk that folye is, whan man may chese,
for accident his substaunce ay to lese.

I mene this, that sin we mowe er day
Wel stele away, and been togider so,
What wit were it to putten in assay,
In cas ye sholden to your fader go,
If that ye mighte come ayein or no?
Thus mene I, that it were a gret folye
To putte that sikernes in jupartye.

And vulgarly to speken of substaunce
Of tresour, may we bothe with us lede
Ynough to live in honour and plesaunce,
Til into tyme that we shul ben dede;
And thus we may eschewen al this drede.
for everich other wey ye can recorde,
Myn herte, ywis, may not therwith acorde.

And hardily, ne dredeth no poverté,
for I have kin and freendes elleswhere
That, though we comen in our bare sherte,
Us sholde neither lakke gold ne gere,
But been honoured whyl we dwelten there.
And go we anon, for, as in myn entente,
This is the beste, if that ye wole assente.

Criseyde, with a syk, right in this wyse
Answerde: Ywis, my dere herte trewe,
We may wel stele away, as ye devyse,
And finde swiche unthrifti weyes newe;
But afterward, ful sore it wol us rewe.
And help me God so at my moste nede
He causeles ye suffren al this drede!

for thilke day that I for cherissinge
Or drede of fader, or of other wight,
Or for estat, delyt, or for weddinge
Be fals to yow, my Troilus, my knight,
Saturnes doughter, Juno, thorough hir might,
As wood as Athamante do me dwelle
Eternaly in Stix, the put of helle!

And this on every god celestial
Lowere it yow, and eek on eche goddessse,
On every Nymphe and deite infernal,
On Satyr and fauny more and lesse,
That halve goddes been of wildernesse;
And Attropos my threed of lyf tobrete
If I be fals; now trowe me if thou leste!

And thou, Simois, that as an arwe clere
Thorough Troye rennest ay downward to the see,
Ber witnessse of this word that seyde is here,
That thilke day that ich untrewed be
To Troilus, myn owene herte free,
That thou retorne bakwarde to thy welle,
And I with body and soule sinke in helle!

But that ye speke, away thus for to go
And leten alle your freendes, God forbede,
for any womman, that ye sholden so,
And namely, sin Troye hath now swich nede
Of help; and eek of o thing taketh hede,
If this were wist, my lif laye in balaunce,
And your honour; God shilde us fro mischaunce!

And if so be that pees hereafter take,
He alday happeth, after anger, game,
Why, Lord! the sorwe and wo ye wolden make,
That ye ne dorste come ayein for shame!
And er that ye juparten so your name,
Beth nought to hasty in this hote fare;
for hasty man ne wanteth never care.

What trowe ye the peple eek al aboute
Wolde of it seye? It is ful light to arede.
They wolden seye, and swere it, out of doute,
That love ne droof yownought to doon this dede,
But lust voluptuous and coward drede.
Thus were al lost, ywis, myn herte dere,
Your honour, which that now shyneth so clere.

And also thenketh on myn honestee,
That flourereth yet, how foule I sholde it shende,
And with what filthe it spotted sholde be,
If in this forme I sholde with yow wende.
Ne though I livede unto the worldes ende,
My name sholde I never ayeinward winne;
Thus were I lost, and that were routhe and sinne.

And forthy slee with reson al this hete;
Men seyn, The suffraunt overcometh, pardee;
Eek Whoso wol han leef, he leef mot lete;
Thus maketh vertue of necessitee
By pacience, and thenk that lord is he
Of fortune ay, that nought wol of hir recche;
And she ne daunteth no wight but a wrecche.

And trusteth this, that certes, herte swete,
Er Phebus suster, Lucina the shene,
The Leoun passe out of this Ariete,
I wol ben here, withouten any wene.
I mene, as helpe me Juno, hevenes quene,
The tenthe day, but if that deeth me assaile,
I wol yow seen, withouten any fayle.

And now, so this be sooth, quod Troilus,
I shal wel suffre unto the tenthe day,
Sin that I see that nede it moot be thus.
But, for the love of God, if it be may,
So lat us stele prively away;
for ever in oon, as for to live in reste,
Myn herte seyth that it wol ben the beste.

O mercy, God, what lyf is this? quod she;
Allas, ye slee me thus for verray tene!
I see wel now that ye mistrusten me;
for by your wordes it is wel ysene.
Now, for the love of Cynthia the shene,
Mistrust me not thus causeles, for routhe;
Sin to be trewe I have yow plight my trouthe.

And thenketh wel, that som tyme it is wit
To spende a tyme, a tyme for to winne;
Ne, pardee, lorn am I nought fro yow yit,
Though that we been a day or two atwinne.
Dryf out the fantasies yow withinne;
And trusteth me, and levest eek your sorwe,
Or here my trouthe, I wol not live til morwe.

for if ye wiste how sore it doth me smerte,
Ye wolde cesse of this; for God, thou wost,
The pure spirit wepeth in myn herte,
To see yow wepen that I love most,
And that I moot gon to the Grekes ost.
Ye, nere it that I wiste remedye
To come ayein, right here I wolde dye!

But certes, I am not so nyce a wight
That I ne can imagin a way
To come ayein that day that I have hight.
for who may holde thing that wol away?
My fader nought, for al his queynte pley.
And by my thrift, my wending out of Troye
Another day shal torne us alle to joye.

Troilus and
Criseyde.
Liber IV.

forthy, with al myn herte I yow beseke,
If that yow list don ought for my preyere,
And for the love which that I love yow eke,
That er that I departe fro yow here,
That of so good a comfort and a chere
I may you seen, that ye may bringe at reste
Myn herte, which that is at point to breste.

And over al this, I pray yow, quod she tho,
Myn owene hertes soothfast suffisaunce,
Sin I am thyn al hool, withouten mo,
That whyl that I am absent, no plesaunce
Of othere do me fro your remembraunce.
for I am ever agast, forwhy men rede,
That Love is thing ay ful of bisy drede.

for in this world ther liveth lady noon,
If that ye were untrew, as God defende!
That so bitraysed were or wo bigoon
As I, that alle trouthe in yow entende.
And douteles, if that ich other wende,
I nere but deed; and er ye cause finde,
for Goddes love, so beth me not unkinde.

¶ To this answerde Troilus and seyde:
Now God, to whom ther nis no cause ywrye,
Me glade, as wis I never unto Criseyde,
Sin thilke day I saw hir first with ye,
Was fals, ne never shal til that I dye;
Ht shorte wordes, wel ye may me leve;
I can no more, it shal be founde at preve.

¶ Graunt mercy, goode myn, ywis, quod
she,
And blisful Venus lat me never sterve
Er I may stonde of plesaunce in degre
To quyte him wel, that so wel can deserve;
And whyl that God my wit wol me conserve,
I shal so doon, so trewe I have yow founde,
That ay honour to meward shal rebounde.

for trusteth wel, that your estat royal
Ne veyn delyt, nor only worthinesse
Of yow in werre, or torney marcial,
Ne pompe, array, nobley, or eek richesse,
Ne made me to rewe on your distresse;
But moral vertue, grounded upon trouthe,
That was the cause I first hadde on yow routhe!

Eek gentil herte and manhod that ye hadde,
And that ye hadde, as me thoughte, in despyt
Every thing that souned into badde,
As rudenesse and poeplish appetyt;
And that your reson bryddled your delyt,
This made, aboven every creature,
That I was your, and shal, whyl I may dure.

And this may lengthe of yeres not fordo,
Ne remuable fortune deface;
But Juppiter, that of his might may do
The sorwful to be glad, so yewe us grace,
Er nightes ten, to meten in this place,
So that it may your herte and myn suffyse;
And fareth now wel, for tyme is that ye ryse.

¶ And after that they longe ypleyned hadde,
And ofte ykist and streite in armes folde,
The day gan ryse, and Troilus him cladde,
And rewfulliche his lady gan biholde,
As he that felte dethes cares colde,
And to hir grace he gan him recomaunde;
Wher him was wo, this holde I no demaunde.

for mannes heed imaginen ne can,
Ne entendement considere, ne tonge telle
The cruel peynes of this sorwful man,
That passen every torment down in helle,
for whan he saugh that she ne mighte dwelle,
Which that his soule out of his herte rente,
Withouten more, out of the chaumbre he wente.
Explicit Liber Quartus.

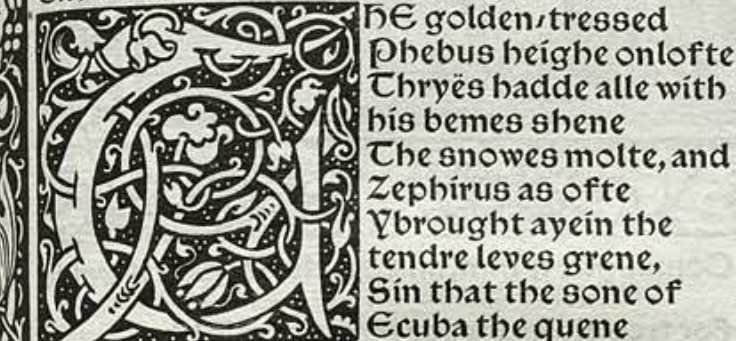
TROILUS AND CRISEYDE. LIBER QUINTUS.

Incipit Liber Quintus.



GAN THE FATAL DESTINEE

That Joves hath in disposicioun,
And to yow, angry Darcas, sustren three,
Committeth, to don execucioun;
for which Criseyde moste out of the toun,
And Troilus shal dwelle forth in pyne
Til Lachesis his threed no longer twyne.



Bigan to love hir first, for whom his sorwe
Was al, that she departe sholde amorwe.

ful redy was at prynte Dyomedes,
Criseyde unto the Grekes ost to lede,
for sorwe of which she felte hir herte blede,
As she that niste what was best to rede.
And trewely, as men in bokes rede,
Men wiste never womman han the care,
Ne was so looth out of a toun to fare.

This Troilus, withouten reed or lore,
As man that hath his joyes eek forlore,
Was waytinge on his lady evermore
As she that was the soothfast crop and more
Of al his lust, or joyes heretofore.
But Troilus, now farewel al thy joye,
for shaltow never seen hir eft in Troye!

Soth is, that whyl he bood in this manere,
He gan his wo ful manly for to hyde,
That wel unnethe it seen was in his chere;
But at the yate ther she sholde oute ryde
With certeyn folk, he hoveid hir tabyde,
So wo bigoon, al wolde he nought him pleyne,

That on his hors unnethe he sat for peyne.

for ire he quook, so gan his herte gnawe,
Whan Diomedes on horse gan him dresse,
And seyde unto himself this ilke sawe:
Alas, quod he, thus foul a wrecchednesse
Why suffre ich it, why nil ich it redresse?
Were it not bet at ones for to dye
Than evermore in langour thus to drye?

Why nil I make at ones riche and pore
To have ynough to done, er that she go?
Why nil I bringe al Troye upon a rore?
Why nil I sleen this Diomedes also?
Why nil I rather with a man or two
Stele hir away? Why wol I this endure?
Why nil I helpen to myn owene cure?

¶ But why he nolde doon so fel a dede,
That shal I seyn, and why him liste it spare:
He hadde in herte alwey a maner drede,
Lest that Criseyde, in rumour of this fare,
Sholde han ben slayn; lo, this was al his care.
And elles, certeyn, as I seyde yore,
He hadde it doon, withouten wordes more.

Criseyde, whan she redy was to ryde,
ful sorwfully she sighte, and seyde Alas!
But forth she moot, for ought that may
bityde,
And forth she rit ful sorwfully a pas.
Ther nis non other remedie in this cas.
What wonder is though that hir sore smerte,
Whan she forgoth hir owene swete herte?

This Troilus, in wyse of curteisye,
With hauke on hond, and with an huge route
Of knyghtes, rood and dide hir companye,
Passinge al the valey fer withoute.
And ferther wolde han riden, out of doute,
ful fayn, and wo was him to goon so sone;
But torne he moste, and it was eek to done.

And right with that was Antenor ycome
Out of the Grekes ost, and every wight
Was of it glad, and seyde he was welcome.
And Troilus, al nere his herte light,
He peyned him with al his fulle might
him to withholde of wepinge at the leste,
And Antenor he kiste, and made feste.

And therwithal he moste his leve take,
And caste his eye upon hir pitously,
And neer he rood, his cause for to make,
To take hir by the honde al sobrelly.
And Lord! so she gan wepen tendrely!
And he ful softe and sleighly gan hir seye:
Now hold your day, and dooth me not to deye.

¶ With that his courser torned he aboute
With face pale, and unto Diomedes
No word he spak, ne noon of al his route;



Of which the sone of Tydeus took hede,
As he that coude more than the crede
In swich a craft, and by the reyne hir hente;
And Troilus to Troye homward he wente.

This Diomedes, that ladde hir by the brydel,
Whan that he saw the folk of Troye aweye,
Thoughte: Al my labour shal not been on ydel,
If that I may, for somewhat shal I seye.
For at the worste it may yet shorte our weye.
I have herd seyd, eek tymes twyes twelve:
He is a fool that wol foryete himselfe.

But natheles this thoughte he wel ynough:
That certaynly I am aboute nought
If that I speke of love, or make it tough;
For douteles, if she have in hir thought
Him that I gesse, he may not been ybrought
So sone away; but I shal finde a mene,
That she not wite as yet shal what I mene.

This Diomedes, as he that coude his good,
Whan this was doon, gan fallen forth in
speche
Of this and that, and asked why she stood
In swich disese, and gan hir eek biseche,
That if that he encrese mighte or eche
With any thing hir ese, that she sholde

Comaunde it him, and seyde he doon it wolde.

for trewely he swoor hir, as a knight,
That ther nas thing with which he mighte
hir plesse,
That he nolde doon his payne & al his might
To doon it, for to doon hir herte an ese.
And preyede hir, she wolde hir sorwe apese,
And seyde: Twis, we Grekes con have joye
To honouren yow, as wel as folk of Troye.

He seyde eek thus: I woot, yow thinketh
straunge,
No wonder is, for it is to yow newe,
Tha queintaunce of these Troians to
chaunge,
for folk of Grece, that ye never knewe.
But wolde never God but if as trewe
H Grek ye shulde among us alle finde
As any Troian is, and eek as kinde.

And by the cause I swoor yow right, lo, now,
To been your freend, and helply, to my might,
And for that more acquaintance eek of yow
Have ich had than another straunger wight,
So fro this forth I pray yow, day and night,
Comaundeth me, how sore that me smerte,
To doon al that may lyke unto your herte:



And that ye me wolde as your brother trete,
And taketh not my frendship in despyt;
And though your sorwes be for thinges grete,
Noot I not why, but out of more respyt,
Myn herte hath for to amende it greet delyt.
And if I may your harmes not redresse,
I am right sory for your hevynesse.

And though ye Troians with us Grekes wrothe
han many a day be, alwey yet, pardee,
O god of love in sooth we serven bothe.
And, for the love of God, my lady free,
Whom so ye hate, as beth not wroth with me,
for trewely, ther can no wight yow serve,
That half so looth your wrath the wolde
deserve.

And here it that we been so neigh the tente
Of Calkas, which that seen us bothe may,
I wolde of this yow telle al myn entente;
But this enseled til another day.
Yeve me your hond, I am, and shal ben ay,
God help me so, whyl that my tyf may dure,
Your owene aboven every creature.

Thus seyde I never er now to womman born;
for God myn herte as wisly glade so,
I lovede never womman here bifore.

As paramours, ne never shal no mo.
And, for the love of God, beth not my fo;
Al can I not to yow, my lady dere,
Compleyne aright, for I am yet to lere.

And wondreth not, myn owene lady bright,
Though that I speke of love to you thus blyve;
for I have herd or this of many a wight,
hath loved thing he never saugh his lyve.
Eek I am not of power for to stryve
Hyens the god of love, but him obeye
I wol alwey, and mercy I yow prey.

Ther been so worthy knightes in this place
And ye so fair, that everich of hem alle
Wol peynen him to stonden in your grace.
But mighte me so fair a grace falle,
That ye me for your servaunt wolde calle,
So lowly ne so trewely you serve
Nil noon of hem, as I shal, til I sterve.

Criseyde unto that purpos lyte answerde,
As she that was with sorwe oppressed so
That, in effect, she nought his tales herde,
But here and there, now here a word or two.
hir thoughte hir sorful herte brast atwo.
for whan she gan hir fader fer aspye,
Wel neigh doun of hir hors she gan to sye.

But natheles she thonked Diomedes
Of al his traaille, and his goode chere,
And that him liste his friendship hir to bede;
And she accepteth it in good manere,
And wolde do fayn that is him leef and dere;
And trusten him she wolde, and wel she mighte,
As seyde she, and from hir hors she alighte.

Hir fader hath hir in his armes nome,
And tweyntye tyme he kiste his doughter swete,
And seyde: O dere doughter myn, welcome!
She seyde eek, she was fayn with him to mete,
And stood forth mewet, mild, and mansuete.
But here I leve hir with hir fader dwelle,
And forth I wol of Troilus yow telle.

To Troye is come this woful Troilus,
In sorwe aboven alle sorwes smerte,
With felon look, and face dispitous.
Tho sodeintly down from his hors he sterte,
And thorough his paleys, with a swollen herte,
To chambre he wente; of nothing took he hede,
Ne noon to him dar speke a word for drede.

And there his sorwes that he spared hadde
He yaf an issue large, and Deeth he cryde;
And in his throwes frenetyk and madde
He cursed Jove, Appollo, and eek Cupyde,
He cursed Ceres, Bacus, and Cipryde,
His burthe, himself, his fate, and eek nature,
And, save his lady, every creature.

To bedde he goth, and weyleth there and torneth
In furie, as dooth he, Ixion, in helle;
And in this wyse he neigh til day sojorneth.
But tho bigan his herte a lyte unswelle
Thorough teres which that gonnen up to welle;
And pitously he cryde upon Criseyde,
And to himself right thus he spak, and seyde:

Wher is myn owene lady lief and dere,
Wher is hir whyte brest, wher is it, wher?
Wher ben hir armes and hir eyen clere,
That yesternight this tyme with me were?
Now may I wepe allone many a tere,
And graspe aboute I may, but in this place,
Save a pilowe, I finde nought tenbrace.

How shal I do? Whan shal she com ayeyn?
Inoot, alas! why leet ich hir to go?
As wolde God, ich hadde as tho be sleyn!
O herte myn, Criseyde, O swete fo!
O lady myn, that I love and no mo!
To whom for evermo myn herte I dowe;
See how I deye, ye nil me not rescowe!

Who seeth yow now, my righte lode/sterre?
Who sit right now or stant in your presence?
Who can conforten now your hertes werre?
Now I am gon, whom yeve ye audience?
Who speketh for me right now in myn absence?
Allas, no wight; and that is al my care;
for wel wot I, as yvel as I ye fare.

How shulde I thus ten dayes ful endure,
Whan I the firste night have al this tene?
How shal she doon eek, sorwful creature?
for tendernesse, how shal she this sustene,
Swich wo for me? O pitous, pale, and grene
Shal been your fresshe wommanliche face
for langour, er ye torne unto this place.

And whan he fil in any slomeringes,
Anoon biginne he sholde for to grone,
And dremen of the dredfullest thinges
That mighte been; as, mete he were allone
In place horrible, makinge ay his mone,
Or meten that he was amonges alle
his enemys, and in hir bondes falle.

And therewithal his body sholde sterte,
And with the stert al sodeinliche awake,
And swich a tremour fele aboute his herte,
That of the feer his body sholde quake;
And therewithal he sholde a noyse make,
And seme as though he sholde falle depe
from heighe alofte; and than he wolde wepe,

And rewen on himself so pitously,
That wonder was to here his fantasye.
Another tyme he sholde mightily
Conforte himself, and seyn it was folye,
So causeles swich drede for to drye,
And eft biginne his aspre sorwes newe,
That every man mighte on his sorwes rewe.

Who coude telle aright or ful discryve
His wo, his pleynte, his langour, and his pyne?
Nought al the men that han or been onlyve
Thou, redere, mayst thyself ful wel devyne
That swich a wo my wit can not defyne.
On ydel for to wryte it sholde I swinke,
Whan that my wit is wery it to thinke.

On hevne yet the sterres were sene,
Although ful pale ywaxen was the mone;
And whyten gan the orisonte shene
Al estward, as it woned is to done.
And Phebus with his rosy carte sone
Gan after that to dresse him up to fare,
Whan Troilus bath sent after Pandare.

This Pandare, that of al the day biforn
Ne mighte have comen Troilus to see,
Although he on his heed it hadde ysworn,
for with the king Pryam alday was he,
So that it lay not in his libertee
Nowher to gon, but on the morwe he wente
To Troilus, whan that he for him sente.

for in his herte he coude wel devyne,
That Troilus al night for sorwe wook;
And that he wolde telle him of his pyne,
This knew he wel ynough, withoute book.
for which to chaumbre streight the wey he took,
And Troilus tho sobrelliche he grette,
And on the bed ful sone he gan him sette.

My Pandarus, quod Troilus, the sorwe
Which that I drye, I may not longe endure.
I trowe I shal not liven til tomorwe;
for which I wolde alwey, on aventure,
To thee devysen of my sepulture
The forme, and of my moeble thou dispone
Right as thee semeth best is for to done.

But of the fyr and flaumbe funeral
In whiche my body brenne shal to glede,
And of the feste and pleyes palestral
At my vigile, I pray thee take good hede
That al be wel; and offre Mars my stede,
My swerd, myn helm, and, leve brother dere,
My sheld to Pallas yef, that shyneth clere.

The poudre in which myn herte ybrend shal torne,
That preyre I thee thou take and it conserve
In a vessel, that men clepeth an urne,
Of gold, and to my lady that I serve,
for love of whom thus pitously I sterve,
So yeve it hir, and do me this plesaunce,
To preyre hir kepe it for a remembraunce.

for wel I fele, by my maladye,
And by my dremes now and yore ago,
Al certeinly, that I mot nedes dye.
The owle eek, which that hight Escaphilo,
hath after me shright alle thise nightes two.
And, god Mercurie! of me now, woful wrecche,
The soule gyde, and, whan thee list, it fecche!

Pandare answerde, and seyde: Troilus,
My dere freend, as I have told thee yore,
That it is folye for to sorwen thus,
And causeles, for whiche I can no more.
But whoso wol not trowen reed ne lore,
I can not seen in him no remedye,
But lete him worthen with his fantasye.

But Troilus, I pray thee tel me now,
If that thou trowe, er this, that any wight
hath loved paramours as wel as thou?
Ye, God wot, and fro many a worthy knight
hath his lady goon a fourtenight,
And he not yet made halvendeil the fare.
What nede is thee to maken al this care?

Sin day by day thou mayst thyselfen see
That from his love, or elles from his wyf,
A man mot twinnen of necessitee,
Ye, though he love hir as his owene lyf;
Yet nil he with himself thus maken stryf.
for wel thou wost, my leve brother dere,
That alwey freendes may nought been yfere.

How doon this folk that seen hir loves wedded
By freendes might, as it bitit ful ofte,
And seen hem in hir spouses bed ybedded?
God woot, they take it wysly, faire and softe.
for why good hope halt up hir herte onlofte,
And for they can a tyme of sorwe endure;
As tyme hem hurt, a tyme doth hem cure.

So sholdestow endure, and late slyde
The tyme, and fonde to ben glad and light.
Ten dayes nis so longe not tabyde.
And sin she thee to comen hath bihight,
She nil hir hestes breken for no wight.
for dred thee not that she nil finden weye
To come ayeyn, my lyf that dorste I leye.

Thy swevenes eek and al swich fantasye
Dryf out, and lat hem faren to mischaunce;
for they procede of thy malencolye,
That doth thee fele in sleep al this penaunce.
A straw for alle swevenes signifaunce!
God helpe me so, I counte hem not a bene,
Ther woot no man aright what dremes mene.

for prestes of the temple tellen this,
That dremes been the revelaciouns
Of goddes, and as wel they telle, ywis,
That they ben infernals illusiouns;
And leches seyn, that of complexiouns
Proceden they, or fast, or glotonye.
Who woot in sooth thus what they signifye?

Eek othere seyn that thorough impressiouns,
As if a wight hath faste a thing in minde,
That therof cometh swiche avisaciouns;
And othere seyn, as they in bokes finde,
That, after tymes of the yer by kinde,
Men dreme, and that theeffect goth by the mone;
But leve no drem, for it is nought to done.

Wel worth of dremes ay thise olde wyves,
And treweliche eek augurie of thise foules;
for fere of which men wenen lese her lyes,
As ravenes qualm, or shryking of thise oules.
To trowen on it bothe fals and foul is.
Allas, alas, so noble a creature
As is a man, shal drede swich ordure!

for which with al myn herte I thee beseeche,
Unto thyself that al this thou foryive;
And rys up now withoute more speche,
And lat us caste how forth may best be drive
This tyme, and eek how freshly we may live
Whan that she cometh, the which shal be right sone;
God help me so, the beste is thus to done.

Rys, lat us speke of lusty lyf in Troye
That we han lad, and forth the tyme dryve;
And eek of tyme cominge us rejoye,
That bringen shal our blisse now so blyve;
And langour of these twyes dayes fyve
We shal therwith so foryete or oppresse,
That wel unnethe it doon shal us duresse.

This toun is ful of lordes al aboute,
And trewes lasten al this mene while.
Go we and pleye us in som lusty route
To Sarpedon, not hennes but a myle.
And thus thou shalt the tyme wel bigyle,
And dryve it forth unto that blisful morwe,
That thou hir see, that cause is of thy sorwe.

Now rys, my dere brother Troilus;
for certes, it noon honour is to thee
To wepe, and in thy bed to jouken thus.
for trewely, of o thing trust to me,
If thou thus ligge a day, or two, or thre,
The folk wol wene that thou, for cowardyse,
Thee feynest syk, and that thou darst not ryse.

¶ This Troilus answerde: O brother dere,
This knowen folk that han ysuffred peyne,
That though he wepe and make sorwful chere,
That feleth harm and smert in every veine,
No wonder is; and though I ever pleyne,
Or alwey wepe, I am nothing to blame,
Sin I have lost the cause of al my game.

But sin of fyne force I moot aryse,
I shal aryse, as sone as ever I may;
And God, to whom myn herte I sacrifyse,
So sende us hastely the tenth day!
for was ther never fowl so fayn of May,
As I shal been, whan that she cometh in Troye,
That cause is of my torment and my joye.

But whider is thy reed, quod Troilus,
That we may pleye us best in al this toun?
¶ By God, my conseil is, quod Pandarus,
To ryde and pleye us with king Sarpedoun.
¶ So longe of this they speken up and down,
Til Troilus gan at the laste assente
To ryse, and forth to Sarpedoun they wente.

This Sarpedoun, as he that honourable
Was ever his lyve, and ful of heigh prowesse,
With al that mighte yserved been on table,
That deyntee was, al coste it greet richesse,
He fedde hem day by day, that swich noblesse,
As seyden bothe the moste and eek the leste,
Was never er that day wist at any feste.

Nor in this world ther is non instrument
Delicious, through wind, or touche, or corde,
As fer as any wight hath ever ywent,
That tonge telle or herte may recorde,
That at that feste it nas wel herd acorde;
Ne of ladies eek so fayr a companye
On daunce, er tho, was never yseyn with yē.

But what avayleth this to Troilus,
That for his sorwe nothing of it roughte?
for ever in oon his herte pietous
ful bisily Criseyde his lady soughte.
On hir was ever al that his herte thoughte.
Now this, now that, so faste imagininge,
That glade, ywis, can him no festeyinge.

These ladies eek that at this feste been,
Sin that he saw his lady was awaye,
It was his sorwe upon hem for to seen,
Or for to here on instrumentz so pleye.
for she, that of his herte berth the keye,
Was absent, lo, this was his fantasye,
That no wight sholde make melodye.

Nor ther nas houre in al the day or night,
Whan he was theras no wight mighte him here,
That he ne seyde: O lufsom lady bright,
How have ye faren, sin that ye were here?
Welcome, ywis, myn owene lady dere.
¶ But welaway, al this nas but a mase;
fortune his howve entended bet to glase.

The lettres eek, that she of olde tyme
Hadde him ysent, he wolde allone rede,
An hundred sythe, atwixen noon and pryme;
Refiguringe hir shap, hir womanhede,
Withinne his herte, and every word and dede
That passed was, and thus he droof to an ende
The ferte day, and seyde, he wolde wende.

And seyde: Leve brother Pandarus,
Intendestow that we shul herē bleve
Til Sarpedoun wol forth congeyen us?
Yet were it fairer that we toke our leve,
for Goddes love, lat us now sone at eve
Our leve take, and homward lat us torne;
for trewely, I nil not thus sojorne.

¶ Pandare answerde: Be we comen hider
To fecchen fyr, and rennen hoom ayein?
God helpe me so, I can not tellen whider
We mighten goon, if I shal soothly seyn,
Ther any wight is of us more fayn
Than Sarpedoun; and if we hennes hye
Thus sodeinly, I holde it vilanye,

Sin that we seyden that we wolde bleve
With him a wouke; and now, thus sodeinly,
The ferte day to take of him our leve,
He wolde wondren on it, trewely!
Lat us holde forth our purpos fermely;
And sin that ye bihighten him to byde,
Hold forward now, and after lat us ryde.

¶ Thus Pandarus, with alle peyne and wo,
Made him to dwelle; and at the woukes ende,
Of Sarpedoun they toke hir leve tho,
And on hir wey they spedden hem to wende.
Quod Troilus: Now God me grace sende,
That I may finden, at myn hom/cominge,
Criseyde comen! and therwith gan he singe.

¶ Ye, hasel/wode! thoughte this Pandare,
And to himself ful softly he seyde:
God woot, refreyden may this hote fare
Er Calkas sende Troilus Criseyde!
¶ But natheles, he japed thus, and seyde,
And swor, ywis, his herte him wel bihighte,
She wolde come as sone as ever she mighte.

Whan they unto the paleys were ycomen
Of Troilus, they down of hors alighte,
And to the chambre hir wey than han they nomen.
And into tyme that it gan to nighte,
They spoken of Criseyde the brighte.
And after this, whan that hem bothe leste,
They spedde hem fro the soper unto reste.

On morwe, as sone as day bigan to clere,
This Troilus gan of his sleep tabreyde,
And to Pandare, his owene brother dere:
for love of God, ful pitously he seyde,
As go we seen the paleys of Criseyde;
for sin we yet may have namore feste,
So lat us seen hir paleys at the leste.

¶ And therwithal, his meyne for to blende,
A cause he fond in toun for to go,
And to Criseydes hous they gonnen wende.
But Lord! this sely Troilus was wo!
him thoughte his sorwful herte braste atwo.
for whan he saugh hir dores sperred alle,
Wel neigh for sorwe adoun he gan to falle.

Therwith whan he was war and gan biholde
How shet was every windowe of the place,
As frost, him thoughte, his herte gan to colde;
for which with chaunged deedlich pale face,
Withouten word, he forth bigan to pace;
And, as God wolde, he gan so faste ryde,
That no wight of his contenance aspyde.

Than seyde he thus: O paleys desolat,
O hous, of houses whylom best yghit,
O paleys empty and disconsolat,
O thou lanterne, of which queynt is the light,
O paleys, whylom day, that now art night,
Wel oughtestow to falle, and I to dye,
Sin she is went that wont was us to gye!

O paleys, whylom croune of houses alle,
Enlumined with sonne of alle blisse!
O ring, fro which the ruby is outfalle,
O cause of wo, that cause hast been of lisse!
Yet, sin I may no bet, fayn wolde I kisse
Thy colde dores, dorste I for this route;
And farewell shryne, of which the seynt is oute!

¶ Therwith he caste on Pandarus his yē
With chaunged face, and pitous to biholde;
And whan he mighte his tyme aright aspye,
As he rood, to Pandarus he tolde
his newe sorwe, and eek his joyes olde,
So pitously and with so dede an hewe,
That every wight mighte on his sorwe rewe.

fro thennesforth he rydeth up and down,
And every thing com him to remembraunce
As he rood forth by places of the toun
In whiche he whylom hadde al his plesaunce.
¶ Lo, yond saugh I myn owene lady daunce;
And in that temple, with hir eyen clere,
Me caughte first my righte lady dere.

And yonder have I herd ful lustily
My dere herte laughe, and yonder pleye
Saugh I hir ones eek ful blisfully.
And yonder ones to me gan she seye:
Now goode swete, love me wel, I preye.
And yond so goodly gan she me biholde,
That to the deeth myn herte is to hir holde.

And at that corner, in the yonder hous,
Herde I myn alderlevest lady dere
So wommanly, with voys melodious,
Singen so wel, so goodly, and so clere,
That in my soule yet me thinketh I here
The blisful soun; and, in that yonder place,
My lady first me took unto hir grace.

¶ Thanne thoughte he thus: O blisful lord Cupyde,
Whanne I the proces have in my memorie,
How thou me hast werreyed on every syde,
Men mighte a book make of it, lyk a storie.
What nede is thee to seke on me victorie,
Sin I am thyn, and hoolly at thy wille?
What joye hastow thyn owene folk to spille?

Wel hastow, lord, ywroke on me thyn ire,
Thou mighty god, and dredful for to greve!
Now mercy, lord, thou wost wel I desire
Thy grace most, of alle lustes leve.
And live and deye I wol in thy bileve;
for which I naxe in guerdon but a bone,
That thou Criseyde ayein me sende sone.

Distreyne hir herte as faste to retorne
As thou dost myn to longen hir to see;
Than woot I wel, that she nil not sojorne.
Now, blisful lord, so cruel thou ne be
Unto the blood of Troye, I preye thee,
As Juno was unto the blood Thebane,
for which the folk of Thebes caughte hir bane.

¶ And after this he to the yates wente
Theras Criseyde outrood a ful good paas,
And up and down ther made he many a wente,
And to himself ful ofte he seyde: Alas!
from hennes rood my blisse and my solas!
As wolde blisful God now, for his joye,
I mighte hir seen ayein come into Troye.

And to the yonder hille I gan hir gyde,
Alas! and there I took of hir my leve!
And yond I saugh hir to hir fader ryde,
for sorwe of which myn herte shal toleve.
And hider hoom I com whan it was eve;
And here I dwelle outcast from alle joye,
And shal, til I may seen hir eft in Troye.

¶ And of himself imagined he ofte
To ben defet, and pale, and waxen lesse
Than he was wont, and that men seyde softe:
What may it be? who can the sothe gesse
Why Troilus hath al this hevinesse?
And al this nas but his malencolye,
That he hadde of himself swich fantasye.

Another tyme imaginen he wolde
That every wight that wente by the weye
Had of him routhe, and that they seyen sholde:
I am right sory Troilus wol deye.
And thus he droof a day yet forth or tweye.
As ye have herd, swich lyf right gan he lede,
As he that stood bitwixen hope and drede.

for which him lyked in his songes shewe
Chencheson of his wo, as he best mighte,
And make a song of wordes but a few,
Somwhat his woful herte for to lighte.
And whan he was from every mannes sighte,
With softe voys he, of his lady dere,
That was absent, gan singe as ye may here.

O sterre, of which I lost have al the light,
With herte soor wel oughte I to bewaile,
That ever derk in torment, night by night,
Toward my deeth with wind in stere I sayle;
for which the tenthe night if that I fayle
The gyding of thy bemes brighte an houre,
My ship and me Caribdis wol devour.

This song when he thus songen hadde, sone
He fil ayein into his sykes olde;
And every night, as was his wone to done,
He stood the brighte mone to beholde,
And al his sorwe he to the mone tolde;
And seyde: Ywis, whan thou art horned newe,
I shal be glad, if al the world be trewe!

I saugh thyn hornes olde eek by the morwe,
Whan hennas rood my righte lady dere,
That cause is of my torment and my sorwe;
for which, O brighte Lucina the clere,
for love of God, ren faste aboute thy spere!
for whan thyn hornes newe ginne springe,
Chan shal she come, that may my blisse bringe!

The day is more, and lenger every night,
Chan they be wont to be, him thoughte tho;
And that the sonne wente his course unright
By lenger wey than it was wont to go;
And seyde: Ywis, me dredeth evermo,
The sonnes sone, Pheton, be onlyve,
And that his fadres cart amis he dryve.

Upon the walles faste eek wolde he walke,
And on the Grekes ost he wolde see,
And to himself right thus he wolde talke:
Lo, yonder is myn owene lady free,
Or elles yonder, ther tho tentes be!
And thennes comth this eyr, that is so sote,
That in my soule I fele it doth me bote.

And hardely this wind, that more and more
Thus stoundemele encreseth in my face,
Is of my ladyes depe sykes sore.
I preve it thus, for in non othere place
Of al this toun, save onliche in this space,
fele I no wind that souneth so lyk payne;
It seyth: Alas! why twinned be we tweyne?

This longe tyme he dryveth forth right thus,
Til fully passed was the nynthe night;
And ay bisyde him was this Pandarus,
That bisily dide alle his fulle might
Him to comforte, and make his herte light;
Yevinge him hope alwey, the tenthe morwe
That she shal come, and stinten al his sorwe.

Upon that other syde eek was Crisseyde,
With wommen fewe, among the Grekes stronge;
for which ful ofte a day, Alas! she seyde,
That I was born! Wel may myn herte longe
After my deeth; for now live I to longe!
Alas! and I ne may it not amende;
for now is wors than ever yet I wende.

My fader nil for nothing do me grace
To goon ayein, for nought I can him queme;
And if so be that I my terme passe,
My Troilus shal in his herte deme
That I am fals, and so it may wel seme.
Thus shal I have unthank on every syde;
That I was born, so weylaway the tyde!

And if that I me putte in jupartye,
To stele away by nighte, and it bifalle
That I be caught, I shal be holde a spye;
Or elles, lo, this drede I most of alle,
If in the bondes of som wrecche I falle,
I am but lost, al be myn herte trewe;
Now mighty God, thou on my sorwe rew!

Ful pale ywaxen was hir brighte face,
Hir limes lene, as she that al the day
Stood whan she dorste, and loked on the place
Ther she was born, and ther she dwelt hadde ay.
And al the night wepinge, alas! she lay,
And thus despaired, out of alle cure,
She ladde hir lyf, this woful creature.

ful ofte a day she sighte eek for destresse,
And in hirself she wente ay portrayinge
Of Troilus the grete worthinesse,
And alle his goodly wordes recordinge
Sin first that day hir love bigan to springe.
And thus she sette hir woful herte a fyre
Thorough remembraunce of that she gan desyre.

In al this world ther nis so cruel herte
That hir hadde herd compleynen in hir sorwe,
That nolde han wopen for hir peynes smerte,
So tendrely she weep, bothe eve and morwe.
Hir nedede no teres for to borwe.
And this was yet the worste of al hir payne,
Ther was no wight to whom she dorste hir pleyne.

ful rewfully she loked upon Troye,
Biheld the toures heighe and eek the halles;
Alas! quod she, the plesaunce and the joye
The whiche that now al torned into galle is,
Have I had ofte withinne yonder walles!
O Troilus, what dostow now, she seyde;
Lord! whether yet thou thenke upon Crisseyde?

Alas! I ne hadde trowed on your lore,
And went with yow, as ye me radde er this!
Thanne hadde I now not syked half so sore.
Who mighte have seyde, that I had doon amis
To stele away with swich on as he is?
But al to late cometh the letuarie,
Whan men the cors unto the grave carie.

To late is now to speke of this matere;
Prudence, alas! oon of thyn eyen three
Me lakked alwey, er that I cam here;
On tyme ypassed, wel remembered me;
On present tyme eek coude I wel ysee.
But futur tyme, er I was in the snare,
Coude I not seen; that causeth now my care.

But natheles, bityde what bityde,
I shal tomorwe at night, by est or weste,
Out of this ost stele on som maner syde,
And go with Troilus wheras him leste.
This purpos wol I holde, and this is beste.
No fors of wikked tonges janglerye,
for ever on love han wrecches had envye.

for whoso wole of every word take hede,
Or rewlen him by every wightes wit,
Ne shal he never thryven, out of drede.
for that that som men blamen ever yit,
Lo, other maner folk commenden it.
And as for me, for al swich variaunce,
felicitie clepe I my suffisaunce.

for which, withouten any wordes mo,
To Troye I wol, as for conclusioun.
But God it wot, er fully monthes two,
She was ful fer fro that entencioun.
for bothe Troilus and Troye toun
Shal knotteles throughout hir herte styde;
for she wol take a purpos for tabyde.

This Diomed, of whom yow telle I gan,
Goth now, withinne himself ay arguinge
With al the sleighte and al that ever he can,
how he may best, with shortest taryinge,
Into his net Crisseydes herte bringe.
To this entente he coude never fyne;
To fishen hir, he leyde out hook and lyne.

But natheles, wel in his herte he thoughte,
That she nas nat withoute a love in Troye.
for never, sithen he hir thennes broughte,
Ne coude he seen her laughe or make joye.
He niste how best hir herte for tacoye.
But for to assaye, he seyde, it nought ne
greveth:
for he that nought nassayeth, nought nacheveth.

Yet seide he to himself upon a night:
Now am I not a fool, that woot wel how
hir wo for love is of another wight,
And hereupon to goon assaye hir now?
Imay wel wite, it nil not been my prow.
for wyse folk in bokes it expresse:
Men shall not wowe a wight in hevynesse.

But whoso mighte winnen swich a flour
from him, for whom she morneth night and day,
He mighte seyn, he were a conquerour.
And right anon, as he that bold was ay,
Thoughte in his herte: Happe, how happe may,
Al sholde I deye, I wole hir herte seche;
I shal no more lesen but my speche.

This Diomed, as bokes us declare,
Was in his nedes prest and corageous;
With sterne voys and mighty limes square,
Hardy, testif, strong, and chevalrous
Of dedes, lyk his fader Tideus.
And som men seyn, he was of tunge large;
And heir he was of Calidoine and Arge.

Crisseyde mene was of hir stature,
Therto of shap, of face, and eek of chere,
Ther mighte been no fairer creature.
And ofte tyme this was hir manere,
To gon yressed with hir heres clere
Down by hir coler at hir bak bihinde,
Which with a threde of golde she wolde binde.

And, save hir browes joyneden yfere,
Ther nas no lak, in ought I can espyen;
But for to speken of hir eyen clere,
Lo, trewely, they writen that hir syen,
That Paradys stood formed in hir yen.
And with hir riche beautee evermore
Strof love in hir, ay which of hem was more.

She sobre was, eek simple, and wys withal,
The beste ynorissheed eek that mighte be,
And goodly of hir speche in general,
Charitable, estatliche, lusty, and free;
Ne nevermo ne lakked hir pitee;
Tendre/herted, slydinge of corage;
But trewely, I can not telle hir age.

And Troilus wel waxen was in highte,
And complet formed by proporcioun
So wel, that kinde it not amenden mighte;
Yong, fresshe, strong, and hardy as lyoun;
Trewe as steel in ech condicioun;
On of the beste enteched creature,
That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure.

And certainly in storie it is yfounde,
That Troilus was never unto no wight,
As in his tyme, in no degre secoude
In durring don that longeth to a knight.
Al mighte a geaunt passen him of might,
His herte ay with the firste and with the beste
Stod paregal, to durre don that him leste.

But for to tellen forth of Diomed:
It fil that after, on the tenthe day,
Sin that Crisseyde out of the citee yede,
This Diomed, as fresshe as braunche in May,
Come to the tente theras Calkas lay,
And feyned him with Calkas han to done;
But what he mente, I shal yow telle sone.

Crisseyde, at shorte wordes for to telle,
Welcomed him, and down by hir him sette;
And he was ethe ynough to maken dwelle.
And after this, withouten longe lette,
The spyces and the wyn men forth hem fette;
And forth they speke of this and that yfere,
As freendes doon, of which som shal ye here.

He gan first fallen of the werre in speche
Bitwixe hem and the folk of Troye toun;
And of thassege he gan hir eek byseche,
To telle him what was hir opinioun.
fro that demaunde he so descendeth doun
To asken hir, if that hir straunge thoughte
The Grekes gyse, & werkes that they wroughte?

And why hir fader tarieth so longe
To wedden hir unto som worthy wight?
Criseyde, that was in hir peynes stronge
for love of Troilus, hir owene knight,
As ferforth as she conning hadde or might,
Answerde him tho; but, as of his entente,
It semed not she wiste what he mente.

But natheles, this ilke Diomedes
Can in himself assure, and thus he seyde:
If ich aright have taken of yow hede,
Me thinketh thus, O lady myn, Criseyde,
That sin I first hond on your brydel leyde,
Whan ye out come of Troye by the morwe,
Ne coude I never seen yow but in sorwe.

Can I not seyn what may the cause be
But if for love of som Troyan it were,
The which right sore wolde athinken me
That ye, for any wight that dwelleth there,
Sholden spille a quarter of a tere,
Or pitously yourselven so bigyle;
for dredeles, it is nought worth the whyle.

The folk of Troye, as who seyth, alle and some
In preson been, as ye yourselven see;
for thennes shal not oon onlyve come
for al the gold bitwixen sonne and see.
Trusteth wel, and understondeth me,
Ther shal not oon to mercy goon onlyve,
Al were he lord of worldes twyes fyve!

Swich wreche on hem, for fecching of Eleyne,
Ther shal be take, er that we hennes wende,
That Manes, which that goddes ben of peyne,
Shal been agast that Grekes wol hem shende.
And men shul drede, unto the worldes ende,
from hennesforth to ravisshe any quene,
So cruel shal our wreche on hem be sene.

And but if Calkas lede us with ambages,
That is to seyn, with double wordes alye,
Swich as men clepe a word with two visages,
Ye shul wel knowen that I nought ne lye,
And al this thing right seen it with your ye,
And that anon; ye nil not trowe how sone;
Now taketh heed, for it is for to done.

What wene ye your wyse fader wolde
Han yeven Antenor for yow anon,
If he ne wiste that the citee sholde
Destroyed been? Why, nay, so mote I goon!
He knew ful wel ther shal not scapen oon
That Troyan is; and for the grete fere,
He dorste not, ye dwelte lenger there.

What wole ye more, lufsom lady dere?
Lat Troye and Troyan fro your herte pace!
Dryf out that bittre hope, and make good chere,
And clepe ayein the beautee of your face,
That ye with salte teres so deface,
for Troye is brought in swich a jupartye,
That, it to save, is now no remedye.

And thenketh wel, ye shal in Grekes finde
A more parfit love, er it be night,
Than any Troyan is, and more kinde,
And bet to serven yow wol doon his might.
And if ye vouche sauf, my lady bright,
I wol ben he to serven yow myselve,
Ye, lever than be lord of Greces twelve!

And with that word he gan to waxen reed,
And in his speche a litel wight he quook,
And caste asyde a litel wight his heed,
And stinte a while; and afterward awook,
And sobrelieche on hir he threw his look,
And seyde: I am, al be it yow no joye,
As gentil man as any wight in Troye.

for if my fader Tydeus, he seyde,
Ylived hadde, I hadde been, er this,
Of Calidone and Arge a king, Criseyde!
And so hope I that I shal yet, ywis,
But he was slayn, alas! the more harm is,
Unhappily at Chebes al to rathe,
Polymites and many a man to scathe.

But herte myn, sin that I am your man,
And been the ferste of whom I seche grace,
To serven you as hertely as I can,
And ever shal, why! I to live have space,
So, er that I departe out of this place,
Ye wol me graunte, that I may tomorwe,
At bettre leyser, telle yow my sorwe.

What shold I telle his wordes that he seyde?
He spak ynow, for o day at the meste;
It preveth wel, he spak so that Criseyde
Graunted, on the morwe, at his requeste,
for to speken with him at the leste,
So that he nolde speke of swich matere;
And thus to him she seyde, as ye may here:

As she that hadde hir herte on Troilus
So faste, that ther may it noon arace;
And straungely she spak, and seyde thus:
O Diomedes, I love that ilke place
Ther I was born; and Joves, for his grace,
Delivere it sone of al that doth it care!
God, for thy might, so leve it wel to fare!

That Grekes wolde hir wraththe on Troye wreche,
If that they mighte, I knowe it wel, ywis.
But it shal not bifallen as ye speke;
And God toform, and fether over this,
I wot my fader wys and redy is;
And that he me hath bought, as ye me tolde,
So dere, I am the more unto him holde.

That Grekes been of heigh condicioun,
I woot eek wel; but certein, men shal finde
As worthy folk withinne Troye toun,
As conning, and as parfit and as kinde,
As been bitwixen Orcades and Inde,
And that ye coude wel your lady serve,
I trowe eek wel, hir thank for to deserve.

But as to speke of love, ywis, she seyde,
I hadde a lord, to whom I wedded was,
The whos myn herte al was, til that he deyde;
The other love, as helpe me now Pallas,
Ther in myn herte nis, ne never was.
And that ye been of noble and heigh kinrede,
I have wel herd it tellen, out of drede.

And that doth me to han so gret a wonder,
That ye wol scornen any womman so.
Eek, God wot, love and I be fer asonder;
I am disposed bet, so mote I go,
Unto my deeth, to pleyne and maken wo.
What I shal after doon, I can not seye;
But trewely, as yet me list not pleye.

Myn herte is now in tribulacioun,
And ye in armes bisy, day by day.
Hereafter, whan ye women han the toun,
Paraunter, thanne so it happen may,
That whan I see that I never er say,
Than wole I werke that I never wroughte!
This word to yow ynough suffysen oughte.

Tomorwe eek wol I speke with yow fayn,
So that ye touchen nought of this matere.
And whan yow list, ye may come here ayein;
And, er ye gon, thus muche I seye yow here:
As helpe me Pallas with hir heres clere,
If that I sholde of any Greek han routhe,
It sholde be yourselven, by my trouthe!

I sey not therfore that I wol yow love,
Ne I sey not nay, but in conclusioun,
I mene wel, by God that sit above:
And therwithal she caste hir eyen doun,
And gan to syke, and seyde: O Troye toun,
Yet bidde I God, in quiete and in reste
I may yow seen, or do myn herte breste.

But in effect, and shortly for to seye,
This Diomedes al freshly newe ayein
Gan pressen on, and faste hir mercy preye;
And after this, the sothe for to seyn,
Hir glove he took, of which he was ful fayn.
And fynally, whan it was waxen eve,
And al was wel, he roos and took his leve.

The brighte Venus folwede and ay taughte
The wey, ther brode Phebus doun alighte;
And Cynthea hir char/hors overraughte
To whirle out of the Lyon, if she mighte;
And Signifier his candeles shewed brighte,
Whan that Criseyde unto hir bedde wente
Inwith hir fadres faire brighte tente.

Retorning in hir soule ay up and doun
The wordes of this sodein Diomedes,
His greet estat, and peril of the toun,
And that she was allone and hadde nede
Of freendes help; and thus bigan to brede
The cause why, the sothe for to telle,
That she tok fully purpos for to dwelle.

The morwe com, and goostly for to speke,
This Diomedes is come unto Criseyde,
And shortly, lest that ye my tale breke,
So wel he for himselve spak and seyde,
That alle hir sykes sore adoun he leyde.
And fynally, the sothe for to seyne,
He reffe hir of the grete of al hir peyne.

And after this the story telleth us,
That she him yaf the faire baye stede,
The which she ones wan of Troilus;
And eek a broche, and that was litel nede,
That Troilus was, she yaf this Diomedes.
And eek, the bet from sorwe him to releve,
She made him were a pencil of hir sleve.

I finde eek in the stories elleswhere,
Whan through the body hurt was Diomedes
Of Troilus, tho weep she many a tere,
Whan that she saugh his wyde woundes blede;
And that she took to kepen him good hede,
And for to hele him of his sorwes smerte.
Men seyn, I not, that she yaf him hir herte.

But trewely, the story telleth us,
Ther made never womman more wo
Than she, whan that she falsed Troilus.
She seyde: Alas! for now is clene ago
My name of trouthe in love, for evermo!
for I have falsed oon, the gentileste
That ever was, and oon the worthieste!

Alas, of me, unto the worldes ende,
Shal neither been ywriten nor ysonge
No good word, for thise bokes wol me shende.
O, rolled shal I been on many a tonge;
Throughout the world my belle shal be ronge;
And women most wol hate me of alle.
Alas, that swich a cas me sholde falle!

They wol seyn, in as muche as in me is,
I have hem don dishonour, weylaway!
Al be I not the firste that dide amis,
What helpeth that to do my blame away?
But sin I see there is no bettre way,
And that to late is now for me to rewe,
To Diomedes algate I wol be trewe.

But Troilus, sin I no better may,
And sin that thus departen ye and I,
Yet preye I God, so yeve yow right good day
As for the gentileste, trewely,
That ever I say, to serven feithfully,
And best can ay his lady honour kepe:
And with that word she brast anon to wepe.

And certes, yow ne haten shal I never,
And freendes love, that shal ye han of me,
And my good word, al mighte I liven ever.
And, trewely, I wolde sory be
for to seen yow in any adversitee.
And gilteles, I woot wel, I yow leve;
But al shal passe; and thus take I my leve.

But trewely, how longe it was bitwene,
That she forsook him for this Diomedee,
Ther is non auctor telleth it, I wene.
Take every man now to his bokes hede;
He shal no terme finden, out of drede.
for though that he bigan to wowe hir sone,
Er he hir wan, yet was ther more to done.

Ne me ne list this sely womman chyd
ferther than the story wol devyse.
Hir name, alas! is published so wyde,
That for hir gilt it oughte ynow suffyse.
And if I mighte excuse hir any wyse,
for she so sory was for hir untrouthe,
Ywis, I wolde excuse hir yet for routhe.

This Troilus, as I biforn have told,
Thus dryveth forth, as wel as he hath might.
But often was his herte hoot and cold,
And namely, that ilke nynthe night,
Which on the morwe she hadde him byhight
To come ayein: God wot, ful litel reste
Hadde he that night; nothing to slepe him leste.

The laurer-crowned Phebus, with his hete,
Gan, in his course ay upward as he wente,
To warmen of the est see the waves wete;
And Nisus doughter song with fresh entente,
Whan Troilus his Pandare after sente;
And on the walles of the toun they pleyde,
To loke if they can seen ought of Criseyde.

Til it was noon, they stoden for to see
Who that ther come; and every maner wight,
That cam fro fer, they seyden it was she,
Til that they coude knowen him aright.
Now was his herte dul, now was it light;
And thus byjaped stonden for to stare
Aboute nought, this Troilus and Pandare.

To Pandarus this Troilus tho seyde:
for ought I wot, bifor noon, sikerly,
Into this toun ne comth nought here Criseyde.
She hath ynow to done, hardily,
To winnen from hir fader, so trowe I;
Hir olde fader wol yet make hir dyne
Er that she go; God yeve his herte pyne!

Pandare answerde: It may wel be, certeyn;
And forthy lat us dyne, I thee bisече;
And after noon than mayst thou come ayein.
And hoom they go, withoute more speche;
And comen ayein, but longe may they seche
Er that they finde that they after cape;
fortune hem bothe thenketh for to jape.

Quod Troilus: I see wel now, that she
Is taried with hir olde fader so,
That er she come, it wol neigh even be.
Com forth, I wol unto the yate go.
Thise portours been unkonninge evermo;
And I wol doon hem holden up the yate
As nought ne were, although she come late.

The day goth faste, and after that comth eve,
And yet com nought to Troilus Criseyde.
He loketh forth by hegge, by tree, by greve,
And fer his heed over the wal he leyde.
And at the laste he torned him, and seyde:
By God, I woot hir mening now, Pandare!
Almost, ywis, al newe was my care.

Now douteles, this lady can hir good;
I woot, she meneth ryden prively.
I comende hir wysdom, by myn hood!
She wol not maken peple nyce
Gaure on hir, whan she comth; but softely
By nighte into the toun she thenketh ryde.
And, dere brother, thenk not longe to abyde.

We han nought elles for to don, ywis,
And Pandarus, now woltow trowen me?
Have here my trouthe, I see hir yond she is,
Heve up thyn eyen, man! maystow not see?
Pandare answerde: Nay, so mote I thee!
Al wrong, by God; what seystow, man, wher art?
That I see yond nis but a farecart.

Alas, thou seist right sooth, quod Troilus;
But hardely, it is not al for nought
That in myn herte I now rejoyse thus.
It is ayein som good I have a thought.
Noot I not how, but sin that I was wrought,
Ne felte I swich a confort, dar I seye;
She comth tonight, my lyf, that dorste I leve!

Pandare answerde: It may be wel, ynough;
And held with him of al that ever he seyde;
But in his herte he thoughte, and softe lough,
And to himself ful sobrelly he seyde:
from haselwode, ther joly Robin pleyde,
Shal come al that that thou abydest here;
Ye, farewell at the snow of ferne yere!

The wardein of the yates gan to calle
The folk which that withoute the yates were,
And bad hem dryven in hir bestes alle,
Or al the night they moste bleven there.
And fer within the night, with many a tere,
This Troilus gan hoomward for to ryde;
for wel he seeth it helpeth nought tabyde.

But natheles, he gladded him in this;
He thoughte he misaccounted hadde his day,
And seyde: I understonde have al amis,
for thilke night I last Criseyde say,
She seyde: I shal ben here, if that I may,
Er that the mone, O dere herte swete!
The Lyon passe, out of this Ariete.

for which she may yet holde al hir biheste.
And on the morwe unto the yate he wente,
And up and down, by west and eek by este,
Upon the walles made he many a wente.
But al for nought; his hope alwey him blente;
for which at night, in sorwe and sykes sore
he wente him hoom, withouten any more.

This hope al clene out of his herte fledde,
He nath wheron now lenger for to honge;
But for the peyne him thoughte his herte bledde,
So were his throwes sharpe and wonder stronge.
for when he saugh that she abood so longe,
He niste what he juggen of it mighte,
Sin she hath broken that she him bihighte.

The thridde, ferthe, fifte, sixte day
After tho dayes ten, of which I tolde,
Bitwixen hope and drede his herte lay,
Yet somewhat trustinge on hir hestes olde.
But whan he saugh she nolde hir terme holde,
He can now seen non other remedye,
But for to shape him sone for to dye.

Therwith the wikked spirit, God us blesse,
Which that men clepeth wode jalousye,
Gan in him crepe, in al this hevynesse;
for which, bycause he wolde sone dye,
He neet ne dronk, for his malencolye,
And eek from every compaigne he fledde;
This was the lyf that al the tyme he ledde.

He so defet was, that no maner man
Unnethe mighte him knowe ther he wente;
So was he lene, and therto pale and wan,
And feble, that he walketh by potente;
And with his ire he thus himselfen shente.
And whoso axed him wherof him smerte,
He seyde, his harm was al aboute his herte.

Pryam ful ofte, and eek his moder dere,
His bretheren and his sustren gonne him freyne
Why he so sorwful was in al his chere,
And what thing was the cause of al his peyne?
But al for nought; he nolde his cause pleyne,
But seyde, he felte a grevous maladye
Aboute his herte, and fayn he wolde dye.

So on a day he leyde him down to slepe,
And so bifel that in his sleep him thoughte,
That in a forest faste he welk to wepe
for love of hir that him thise peynes wroughte;
And up and down as he the forest soughte,
He mette he saugh a boor with tuskes grete,
That sleep ayein the bryghte sonnes hete.

And by this boor, faste in his armes folde,
Lay kissing ay his lady bryght Criseyde:
for sorwe of which, whan he it gan biholde,
And for despyt, out of his slepe he breyde,
And loude he cryde on Pandarus, and seyde:
O Pandarus, now knowe I crop and rote!
I nam but deed, ther nis non other bote!

My lady bryght Criseyde hath me bitrayed,
In whom I trusted most of any wight,
She elleswhere hath now hir herte apayed;
The blisful goddes, through hir grete might,
Han in my dreem yshewed it ful right.
Thus in my dreem Criseyde I have biholde.
And al this thing to Pandarus he tolde.

O my Criseyde, alas! what subtiltee,
What newe lust, what beautee, what science,
What wratthe of juste cause have ye to me?
What gilt of me, what fel experience
Hath fro me raft, alas! thyn advertence?
O trust, O feyth, O depe asseuraunce,
Who hath me refit Criseyde, al my plesaunce?

Alas! why leet I you from hennes go,
for which wel neigh out of my wit I breyde?
Who shal now trowe on any othes mo?
God wot I wende, O lady bryght, Criseyde,
That every word was gospel that ye seyde!
But who may bet bigylen, if him liste,
Than he on whom men weneth best to triste?

What shal I doon, my Pandarus, alas!
I fele now so sharpe a newe peyne,
Sin that ther is no remedie in this cas,
That bet were it I with myn hondes tweyne
Myselfen slow, than alwey thus to pleyne.
for through my deeth my wo sholde han an ende,
Ther every day with lyf myself I shende.

Pandare answerde and seyde: Alas the whyle
That I was born; have I not seyde er this,
That dremes many a maner man bigyle?
And why? for folk expounden hem amis.
How darstow seyn that fals thy lady is,
for any dreem, right for thyn owene drede?
Lat be this thought, thou canst no dremes rede.

Paraunter, ther thou dremest of this boor,
It may so be that it may signifye
Hir fader, which that old is and eek boor,
Ayein the sonne lyth, on poynt to dye,
And she for sorwe ginneth wepe and crye,
And kisseth him, ther he lyth on the grounde;
Thus shuldestow thy dreem aright expounde.

How mighte I thanne do? quod Troilus,
To knowe of this, ye, were it never so lyte?
Now seystow wysly, quod this Pandarus,
My reed is this, sin thou canst wel endyte,
That hastely a lettre thou hir wryte,
Thorugh which thou shalt wel bringen it aboute,
To knowe a sooth of that thou art in doute.

And see now why; for this I dar wel seyn,
That if so is that she untrewed be,
I can not trowe that she wol wryte ayein.
And if she wryte, thou shalt ful sone see,
As whether she hath any libertee
To come ayein, or elles in som clause,
If she be let, she wol assigne a cause.

Thou hast not writen hir sin that she wente,
Nor she to thee, and this I dorste leye,
Ther may swich cause been in hir entente,
That hardely thou wolt thyselfen seye,
That hir abood the beste is for yow tweye.
Now wryte hir thanne, and thou shalt fele sone
A sothe of al; ther is no more to done.

Acorded been to this conclusioun,
And that anon, this ilke lordes two;
And hastely sit Troilus adoun,
And rolleth in his herte to and fro,
How he may best discryven hir his wo.
And to Criseyde, his owene lady dere,
He wroot right thus, and seyde as ye may here.

Right fresshe flour, whos I have been and shal,
Withouthen part of elleswhere servyse,
With herte, body, lyf, lust, thought, and al;
I woful wight, in every humble wyse
That tonge telle or herte may devyse,
As ofte as matere occupyeth place,
Me recomaunde unto your noble grace.

Lyketh it yow to witen, swete herte,
As ye wel knowe how longe tyme agoon
That ye me lafte in aspre peynes smerte,
Whan that ye wente, of which yet bote noon
Have I non had, but ever wers bigoon
fro day to day am I, and so mot dwelle,
While it yow list, of wele and wo my welle!

for which to yow, with dredful herte trewe,
I wryte, as he that sorwe dryfth to wryte,
My wo, that every houre encreseth newe,
Compleyninge as I dar or can endyte.
And that defaced is, that may ye wyte
The teres, which that fro myn eyen reyne,
That wolde speke, if that they coude, and pleyne.

Yow first bisече I, that your eyen clere
To look on this defouled ye not holde;
And over al this, that ye, my lady dere,
Wol vouchesauf this lettre to biholde.
And by the cause eek of my cares colde,
That sleeth my wit, if ought amis me asterte,
foryeve it me, myn owene swete herte.

If any servant dorste or oughte of right
Upon his lady pitously compleyne,
Than wene I, that ich oughte be that wight,
Considered this, that ye these monthes tweyne
Han taried, ther ye seyden, sooth to seyne,
But dayes ten ye nolde in ost sojourne,
But in two monthes yet ye not retourne.

But forasmuche as me mot nedes lyke
At that yow list, I dar not pleyne more,
But humbely with sorwful sykes syke;
Yow wryte ich myn unresty sorwes sore,
fro day to day desyring evermore
To knowen fully, if your wil it were,
How ye han ferd and doon, whyl ye be there.

The whos welfare and hele eek God encesse
In honour swich, that upward in degre
It growe alwey, so that it never cesse;
Right as your herte ay can, my lady free,
Devyse, I prey to God so mote it be.
And graunte it that ye sone upon me rewe
As wisly as in al I am yow trewe.

And if yow lyketh knowen of the fare
Of me, whos wo ther may no wight discryve,
I can no more but, cheste of every care,
At wrytinge of this lettre I was onlyve,
Al redy out my woful goost to dryve;
Which I delaye, and holde him yet in honde,
Upon the sight of matere of your sonde.

Myn eyen two, in veyn with which I see,
Of sorwful teres salte am waxen welles;
My song, in pleynte of myn adversitee;
My good, in harm; myn ese eek waxen helle is.
My joye, in wo; I can sey yow nought elles,
But turned is, for which my lyf I warie,
Everich joye or ese in his contrarie.

Which with your cominge hoom ayein to Troye
Ye may redesse, and, more a thousand sythe
Than ever ich hadde, encessen in me joye.
for was ther never herte yet so blythe
To han his lyf, as I shal been as swythe
As I yow see; and, though no maner routhe
Commeve yow, yet thinketh on your trouthe.

And if so be my gilt hath deeth deserved,
Or if you list no more upon me see,
In guerdon yet of that I have you served,
Biseche I yow, myn hertes lady free,
That hereupon ye wolden wryte me,
for love of God, my righte lode/sterre,
Ther deeth may make an ende of al my werre.

If other cause aught doth yow for to dwelle,
That with your lettre ye me recomforte;
for though to me your absence is an helle,
With patience I wol my wo comporte.
And with your lettre of hope I wol desporte.
Now wryteth, swete, and lat me thus not pleyne;
With hope, or deeth, delivereth me fro peyne.

Ywis, myn owene dere herte trewe,
I woot that, whan ye next upon me see,
So lost have I myn hele and eek myn hewe,
Criseyde shal nought conne knowe me!
Ywis, myn hertes day, my lady free,
So thursteth ay myn herte to biholde
Your beautee, that my lyf unneth I holde.

I sey no more, al have I for to seye
To you wel more than I telle may;
But whether that ye do me live or deye,
Yet pray I God, so yeve yow right good day.
And fareth wel, goodly fayre fresshe may,
As ye that lyf or deeth me may comaunde;
And to your trouthe ay I me recomaunde

With hele swich that, but ye yeven me
The same hele, I shal noon hele have.
In you lyth, whan yow list that it so be,
The day in which me clothen shal my grave.
In yow my lyf, in yow might for to save
Me from disese of alle peynes smerte;
And fare now wel, myn owene swete herte!
Le vostre T.

This lettre forth was sent unto Criseyde,
Of which hir answeere in effect was this;
ful pitously she wroot ayein, and seyde,
That also sone as that she might, ywis,
She wolde come, and mende al that was mis.
And fynally she wroot and seyde him thanne,
She wolde come, ye, but she niste whanne.

But in hir lettre made she swich festes,
That wonder was, & swereth she loveth him best,
Of which he fond but botmeles bihestes.
But Troilus, thou mayst now, est or west,
Dypte in an ivy leef, if that thee lest;
Thus gooth the world; God shilde us fro
mischaunce,
And every wight that meneth trouthe avaunce!

Encessen gan the wo fro day to night
Of Troilus, for taryng of Criseyde;
And lessen gan his hope and eek his might,
for which al doun he in his bed him leyde;
He ne eet, ne dronk, ne sleep, ne word he seyde,
Imagininge ay that she was unkinde;
for which wel neigh he wex out of his minde.

This dreem, of which I told have eek biforn,
May never come out of his remembraunce;
He thoughte ay wel he hadde his lady lorn,
And that Joves, of his purveyaunce,
him shewed hadde in sleep the signifiante
Of hir untrouthe and his disaventure,
And that the boor was shewed him in figure.

for which he for Sibille his suster sente,
That called was Cassandre eek al aboute;
And al his dreem he tolde hir er he stente,
And hir bisoughte assoilen him the doute
Of the stronge boor, with tuskes stoute;
And fynally, withinne a litel stounde,
Cassandre him gan right thus his dreem
expounde.

She gan first smyle, and seyde: O brother dere,
If thou a sooth of this desyrest knowe,
Thou most a fewe of olde stories here,
To purpos, how that fortune overthrowe
hath lordes olde; through which, withinne a
throwe,
Thou wel this boor shalt knowe, & of what kinde
he comen is, as men in bokes finde.

Diane, which that wrooth was and in ire
for Grekes nolde doon hir sacrificse,
Ne encens upon hir auter sette afyre,
nn 3

She, for that Grekes gonne hir so dispysse,
Wrok hir in a wonder cruel wyse.
for with a boor as greet as oxe in stalle
She made up frete hir corn and vynes alle.

To slee this boor was al the contree reysed,
Amonges which ther com, this boor to see,
A mayde, oon of this world the best ypreysed;
And Meleagre, lord of that contree,
He lovede so this fresshe mayden free
That with his manhood, er he wolde stente,
This boor he slow, and hir the heed he sente;

Of which, as olde bokes tellen us,
Ther roos a contek and a greet envye;
And of this lord descended Tydeus.
By ligne, or elles olde bokes lye;
But how this Meleagre gan to dye
Thorugh his moder, wol I yow not telle,
for al to long it were for to dwelle.

Argument of the 12 Books of Statius' Thebais.
Associat profugum Tideo primus Polimitem;
Tidea legatum docet insidiasque secundus;
Tercius Hemoniden canit et vates latitantes;
Quartus habet reges ineuntes prelia septem;
Mox furie Lenne quinto narratur et anguis;
Archimori bustum sexto ludique leguntur;
Dat Graios Thebes et vatem septimus umbris;
Octavo cecidit Tideo, spes, vita Pelasgis;
Ypomedon nono moritur cum Parthonopeo;
fulmine percussus, decimo Capaneus superatur;
Undecimo sese perimunt per vulnera fratres;
Argivam flentem narrat duodenus et ignem.

She tolde eek how Tydeus, er she stente,
Unto the stronge citee of Thebes,
To cleyne kingdom of the citee, wente,
for his felawe, daun Polymites,
Of which the brother, daun Ethyocles,
ful wrongfully of Thebes helde the strengthe;
This tolde she by proces, al by lengthe.

She tolde eek how Hemonides asterte,
Whan Tydeus slough fifty knyghtes stoute.
She tolde eek al the prophesyes by herte,
And how that sevene kinges, with hir route,
Bisegeden the citee al aboute;
And of the holy serpent, and the welle,
And of the furies, al she gan him telle.

Of Archimoris buryng and the pleyes,
And how Amphiorax fil through the grounde,
How Tydeus was slayn, lord of Argeyes,
And how Ypomedon in litel stounde
Was dreynt, and deed Parthonope of wounde;
And also how Capaneus the proude
With thunder/dint was slayn, that cryde loude.

She gan eek telle him how that either brother,
Ethyocles and Polimyte also,
At a scarmyche, eche of hem slough other,
And of Argyves wepinge and hir wo;

And how the town was brent she tolde eek tho.
And so descendeth down from gestes olde
To Diomede, and thus she spak and tolde.

¶ This ilke boor bitokneth Diomede,
Tydeus sone, that doun descended is
fro Meleagre, that made the boor to blede.
And thy lady, wherso she be, ywis,
This Diomede hir herte hath, and she his.
Weep if thou wolt, or leef; for out of doute,
This Diomede is inne, and thou art oute.

¶ Thou seyst nat sooth, quod he, thou
sorceresse,
With al thy false goost of prophesye!
Thou wenest been a greet devyneresse;
Now seestow not this fool of fantasye
Deyneth hir on ladyes for to lye?
Hwey, quod he, ther Joves yve thee sorwe!
Thou shalt be fals, paraunter, yet tomorwe!

As wel thou mightest lye on Alceste,
That was of creatures, but men lye,
That ever weren, kindest and the beste.
for whanne hir housbonde was in jupartye
To dye himself, but if she wolde dye,
She chees for him to dye and go to helle,
And starf anon, as us the bokes telle.

¶ Cassandre goth, and he with cruel herte
foryat his wo, for angre of hir speche;
And from his bed al sodeinly he sterte,
As though al hool him hadde ymad a leche.
And day by day he gan enquire and seche
A sooth of this, with al his fulle cure;
And thus he dryeth forth his aventure.

fortune, whiche that permutacioun
Of thinges hath, as it is hir committed
Through purveyaunce and disposicioun
Of heighe Jove, as regnes shal ben flitted
fro folk in folk, or whan they shal ben smitted,
Gan pulleaway the fetheres brighte of Troye
fro day to day, til they ben bare of joye.

Among al this, the fyn of the parodie
Of Ector gan approchen wonder blyve;
The fate wolde his soule sholde unbodie,
And shapen hadde a mene it out to dryve;
Ayeins which fate him helpeth not to stryve;
But on a day to fighten gan he wende,
At which, alas! he caughte his lyves ende.

for which me thinketh every maner wight
That haunteth armes oughte to biwayle
The deeth of him that was so noble a knight;
for as he drough a king by thaventayle,
Unwar of this, Achilles through the mayle
And through the body gan him for to ryve;
And thus this worthy knight was brought of lyve.

for whom, as olde bokes tellen us,
Was mad swich wo, that tonge it may not telle;
550

And namely, the sorwe of Troilus,
That next him was of worthinesse welle.
And in this wo gan Troilus to dwelle,
That, what for sorwe, and love, and for
unreste,
ful ofte a day he bad his herte breste.

But natheles, though he gan him dispeyre,
And dradde ay that his lady was untrew,
Yet ay on hir his herte gan repeyre.
And as these loveres doon, he soughe ay newe
To gete ayein Criseyde, bright of hewe.
And in his herte he wente hir excusinge,
That Calkas causede al hir taryinge.

And ofte tyme he was in purpos grete
Himselfen lyk a pilgrim to disgyse,
To seen hir; but he may not contrefete
To been unknowen of folk that weren wyse,
Ne finde excuse aright that may suffyse,
If he among the Grekes knowen were;
for which he weep ful ofte many a tere.

To hir he wroot yet ofte tyme al newe
ful pitously, he lefte it nought for slouth,
Biseching hir that, sin that he was trewe,
She wolde come ayein and holde hir trouthe,
for which Criseyde upon a day, for routhe,
I take it so, touchinge al this matere,
Wrot him ayein, and seyde as ye may here.

¶ Cupydes sone, ensample of goodlibede,
O sward of knighthod, sours of gentillesse!
How mighte a wight in torment and in drede
And heleles, yow sende as yet gladnesse?
I herteles, I syke, I in distresse;
Sin ye with me, nor I with yow may dele,
Yow neither sende ich herte may nor hele.

Your lettres ful, the papir al ypleynted,
Conseyved hath myn hertes piétee;
I have eek seyn with teres al depeynted
Your lettre, and how that ye requeren me
To come ayein, which yet ne may not be.
But why, lest that this lettre founden were,
No mencioniun ne make I now, for fere.

Grevous to me, God woot, is your unreste,
Your haste, and that, the goddes ordenaunce,
It semeth not ye take it for the beste.
Nor other thing nis in your remembraunce,
As thinketh me, but only your plesaunce.
But beth not wrooth, and that I yow biseche;
for that I tarie, is al for wikked speche.

for I have herd wel more than I wende,
Touchinge us two, how thinges han ystonde;
Which I shal with dissimulinge amende.
And beth nought wrooth, I have eek un-
derstonde,
How ye ne doon but holden me in honde.
But now no fors, I can not in yow gesse
But alle trouthe and alle gentillesse.

Comen I wol, but yet in swich disjoyn-
te stonde as now, that what yeer or what day
That this shal be, that can I not apoynte.
But in effect, I prey yow, as I may,
Of your good word and of your frendship ay.
for trewely, whyl that my lyf may dure,
As for a frend, ye may in me assure.

Yet prey I yow on yvel ye ne take,
That it is short which that I to yow wryte;
I dar not, ther I am, wel lettres make,
Ne never yet ne coude I wel endyte.
Eek greet effect men wryte in place lyte.
Thentente is al, and nought the lettres space;
And fareth now wel, God have you in his grace!
La vostre C.

¶ This Troilus this lettre thoughte al straunge,
Whan he it saugh, and sorwefully he sighte;
him thoughte it lyk a kalendes of chaunge;
But fynally, he ful ne trowen mighte
That she ne wolde him holden that she highte;
for with ful yvel wil list him to leve
That loveth wel, in swich cas, though him greve.

But natheles, men seyn that, at the laste,
for any thing, men shal the sothe see;
And swich a cas bitidde, and that as faste,
That Troilus wel understood that she
Nas not so kinde as that hir oughte be.
And fynally, he woot now, out of doute,
That al is lost that he hath been aboute.

Stood on a day in his malencolye
This Troilus, and in suspicioun
Of hir for whom he wende for to dye.
And so bifel, that throughout Troye toun,
As was the gyse, ybore was up and doun
A maner cote/armure, as seyth the storie,
Biforn Deiphebe, in signe of his victorie,

The whiche cote, as telleth Lollius,
Deiphebe it hadde yrent from Diomede
The same day; and whan this Troilus
It saugh, he gan to taken of it hede,
Hysing of the lengthe and of the brede,
And al the werk; but as he gan biholde,
ful sodeinly his herte gan to colde,

As he that on the coler fond withinne
A broche, that he Criseyde yaf that morwe
That she from Troye moste nedes twinne,
In remembraunce of him and of his sorwe;
And she him leyde ayein hir feyth to borwe
To kepe it ay; but now, ful wel he wiste,
his lady nas no lenger on to triste.

He gooth him hoom, and gan ful sone sende
for Pandarus; and al this newe chaunce,
And of this broche, he tolde him word and ende,
Compleyninge of hir hertes variaunce,
his longe love, his trouthe, and his penaunce;
And after deeth, withouten wordes more,
ful faste he cryde, his reste him to restore.

¶ Than spak he thus: O lady myn Criseyde,
Wher is your feyth, and wher is your biheste?
Wher is your love, wher is your trouthe, he seyde;
Of Diomede have ye now al this feste!
Allas, I wolde have trowed at the leste,
That, sin ye nolde in trouthe to me stonde,
That ye thus nolde han holden me in honde!

Who shal now trowe on any othes mo?
Allas, I never wolde han wend, er this,
That ye, Criseyde, coude han chaunged so;
Ne, but I hadde agilt and doon amis,
So cruel wende I not your herte, ywis,
To slee me thus; alas, your name of trouthe
Is now fordoon, and that is al my routhe.

Was ther non other broche yow liste lete
To feffe with your newe love, quod he,
But thilke broche that I, with teres wete,
Yow yaf, as for a remembraunce of me?
Non other cause, alas, ne hadde ye
But for despyt, and eek for that ye mente
Aloutrely to shewen your entente!

Through which I see that clene out of your minde
Ye han me cast, and I ne can nor may,
for al this world, within myn herte finde
To unloven yow a quarter of a day!
In cursed tyme I born was, weylaway!
That ye, that doon me al this wo endure,
Yet love I best of any creature.

Now God, quod he, me sende yet the grace
That I may meten with this Diomede!
And trewely, if I have might and space,
Yet shal I make, I hope, his aydes blede.
O God, quod he, that oughtest taken hede
To fortheren trouthe, and wronges to punyce,
Why niltow doon a vengeance on this vyce?

O Pandare, that in dremes for to triste
Me blamed hast, and wont art ofte upbreyde,
Now maystow see thyselfe, if that thee liste,
How trewe is now thy nece, bright Criseyde!
In sondry formes, God it woot, he seyde,
The goddes shewen bothe joye and tene
In slepe, and by my dreame it is now sene.

And certaynly, withoute more speche,
from hennesforth, as ferforth as I may,
Myn owene deeth in armes wol I seche;
I recche not how sone be the day!
But trewely, Criseyde, swete may,
Whom I have ay with al my might ysserved,
That ye thus doon, I have it nought deserved.

¶ This Pandarus, that alle thise thinges herde,
And wiste wel he seyde a sooth of this,
He nought a word ayein to him answerde;
for sory of his frendes sorwe he is,
And shamed, for his nece hath doon amis;
And stant, astoned of this causes tweye,
As stille as stoon; a word ne coude he seye.
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But at the laste thus he spak, and seyde:
My brother dere, I may thee do no more.
What shulde I seyn? I hate, ywis, Criseyde!
And God wot, I wol hate hir evermore!
And that thou me bisoughtest doon of yore,
Havyng unto myn honour ne my reste
Right no reward, I dide al that thee leste.

If I dide ought that mighte lyken thee,
It is me leef; and of this treson now,
God woot, that it a sorwe is unto me!
And dredeles, for hertes ese of yow,
Right fayn wolde I amende it, wiste I how.
And fro this world, almighty God I preye,
Delivere hir sone; I can no more seye.

Gret was the sorwe and pleynt of Troilus;
But forth hir cours fortune ay gan to holde.
Criseyde loveth the sone of Tydeus,
And Troilus mot wepe in cares colde.
Swich is this world; whoso it can biholde,
In eche estat is litel hertes reste;
God leve us for to take it for the beste!

In many cruel batayle, out of drede,
Of Troilus, this ilke noble knight,
As men may in this olde boke rede,
Was sene his knighthod and his grete might.
And dredeles, his ire, day and night,
ful cruelly the Grekes ay aboute;
And alwey most this Diomed he soughte.

And ofte tyme, I finde that they mette
With bloody strokes and with wordes grete,
Assayinge how hir speres weren whette;
And God it woot, with many a cruel hete
Gan Troilus upon his helm to bete.
But natheles, fortune it nought ne wolde,
Of others hond that either deyen sholde.

And if I hadde ytaken for to wryte
The armes of this ilke worthy man,
Than wolde I of his batailles endyte.
But for that I to wryte first bigan
Of his love, I have seyde as that I can.
His worthy dedes, whoso list hem here,
Reed Dares, he can telle hem alle yfere.

Bisechinge every lady bright of hewe,
And every gentil womman, what she be,
That al be that Criseyde was untrewed,
That for that gilt she be not wrooth with me.
Ye may hir gilt in othere boke see;
And gladlier I wol wryten, if yow leste,
Penelope's trouthe and good Alceste.

Ne I sey not this alonly for thise men,
But most for wommen that bitraysed be
Through false folk; God yve hem sorwe, amen!
That with hir grete wit and subtiltee
Bitrayse yow! and this comveeth me
To speke, and in effect yow alle I preye,
Beth war of men, and herkeneth what I seye!

Go, litel book, go litel myn tregedie,
Ther God thy maker yet, er that he dye,
So sende might to maken som comedie!
But litel book, no making thou nenvye,
But subgit be to alle poesye;
And his the steppes, wheras thou seest pace
Virgile, Ovyde, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.

And for ther is so greet diversitee
In English and in wryting of our tonge,
So preye I God that noon miswryte thee,
Ne thee mismetre for defaute of tonge.
And red wherso thou be, or elles songe,
That thou be understonde I God beseche!
But yet to purpos of my rather speche.

The wraththe, as I began yow for to seye,
Of Troilus, the Grekes boughten dere;
for thousandes his hondes maden deye,
As he that was withouten any pere,
Save Ector, in his tyme, as I can here.
But weylaway, save only Goddes wille,
Dispitously him slough the fiers Achille.

And whan that he was slayn in this manere,
His lighte goost ful blisfully is went
Up to the holownesse of the seventh spere,
In convers letinge every element;
And ther he saugh, with ful avysement,
The erratik sterres, herkeninge armonye
With sownes fulle of hevenish melodye.

And down from thennes faste he gan avyse
This litel spot of erthe, that with the see
Enbraced is, and fully gan despise
This wretched world, and held al vanitee
To respect of the pleyn felicittee
That is in hevne above; and at the laste,
Ther he was slayn, his loking down he caste;

And in himself he lough right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his deeth so faste;
And dampned al our werk that folweth so
The blinde lust, the which that may not laste,
And sholden al our herte on hevne caste.
And forth he wente, shortly for to telle,
Ther as Mercurie sorted him to dwelle.

Swich fyn hath, lo, this Troilus for love,
Swich fyn hath al his grete worthinesse;
Swich fyn hath his estat real above,
Swich fyn his lust, swich fyn bath his noblesse;
Swich fyn hath false worldes brotellesse.
And thus bigan his lovinge of Criseyde,
As I have told, and in this wyse he deyde.

O yonge fresshe folkes, he or she,
In which that love up groweth with your age,
Repeyeth hoom from worldly vanitee,
And of your herte upcasteth the visage
To thilke God that after his image
Yow made, and thinketh al nis but a fayre
This world, that passeth sone as floures fayre.

And loveth him, the which that right for love
Upon a cros, our soules for to beye,
first starf, and roos, and sit in hevne above;
for he nil falsen no wight, dar I seye,
That wol his herte al hoolly on him leye.
And sin he best to love is, and most meke,
What nedeth feyned loves for to seke?

Lo here, of Payens corsed olde rytes,
Lo here, what alle hir goddes may availle;
Lo here, these wretched worldes appetytes;
Lo here, the fyn and guerdon for travaille
Of Jove, Appollo, of Mars of swich rascaille!
Lo here, the forme of olde clerkes speche
In poetrye, if ye hir boke seche.

O moral Gower, this book I directe

To thee, and to the philosophical Strode,
To vouchen sauf, ther nede is, to corecte,
Of your benignitees and zeles gode.
And to that sothfast Crist, that starf on rode,
With al myn herte of mercy ever I preye;
And to the Lord right thus I speke and seye:

Thou oon, and two, and three, eterne on tyve,
That regnest ay in three and two and oon,
Uncircumscrip, and at mayst circumscripve,
As from visible and invisible foon
Defende; and to thy mercy, everichoon,
So make us, Jesus, for thy grace digne,
for love of mayde and moder thyn benigne!

Amen.
Explicit Liber Troili et Criseydis.



Kelmscott

HERE ENDS the Book of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, edited by f. S. Ellis; ornamented with pictures designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, and engraved on wood by W. H. Hooper. Printed by me William Morris at the Kelmscott Press, Upper Mall, Hammersmith, in the County of Middlesex, finished on the 8th day of May, 1896.

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